ROU[illegible]LRI

NAINU

Round Kacheri

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

P. GHOSE

"I do not give you to posterity as a pattern to imitate, but as an example to deter."

JUNIUS.

"Invest me in my motley: give me leave
To speak my mind, and I will through and through
Cleanse the foul body of the infected world,
If they will patiently receive my medicine."

SHAKESPEARE.

"It is a strange thing to behold what gross errors an extreme absurdities many (especially of the greater sort) do commit for want of a friend to tell them of them."

BACON.

CALCUTTA & SIMLA

THACKER, SPINK & CO

1915

PRINTED BY
THACKER, SPINK & CO
CALCUTTA

DEDICATED TO C. E. B.

As a small token of affection and gratitude for the appreciation which has encouraged the publication of these sketches.

Almost all these sketches appeared originally in "The Statesman," and are reproduced here, after revision and amplification, with the kind permission of the Editor of that paper.

NAINU.

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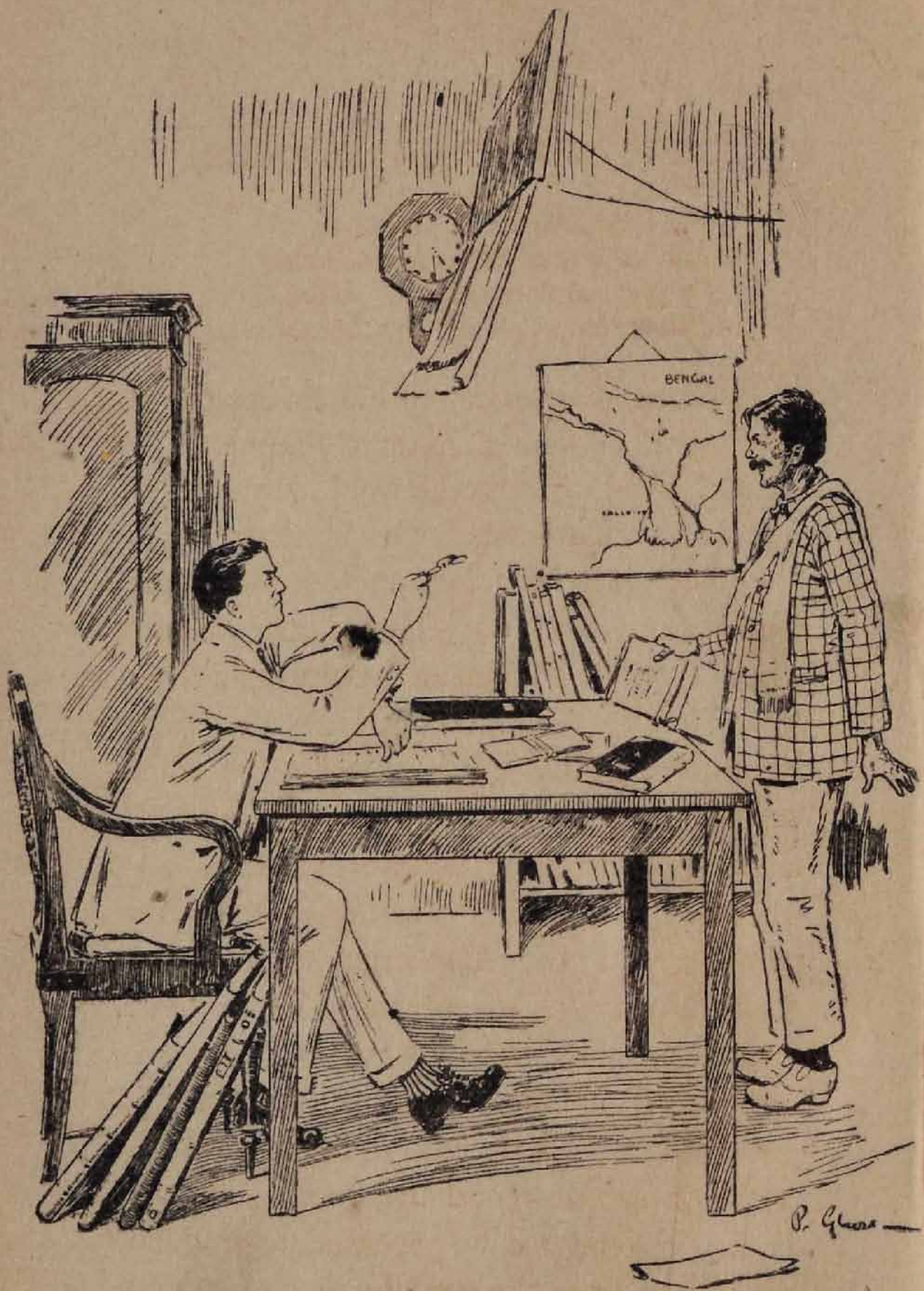


THE INSPECTING OFFICER IN FULL CRY.

THE INSPECTING OFFICER.

His chief delight's to domineer,
And crow like captious chanticleer,
Or jeer and fleer and safely sneer,
Thank God ! he comes but once a year.

"NOTHING is certain in life except death and taxes," said Benjamin Franklin. If he had lived in India, he would have added the Inspecting Officer, who is always with us under one name or another. Broadly speaking, Inspecting Officers are of two species—those who mean business and those who do not. The latter includes the officer who periodically inspects volunteer corps without ever indulging in any candid criticism of their amateur efforts. Such Inspecting Officers are pleasant enough individuals, but the Inspecting Officer who visits a *Kacheri* is essentially a man who means business. He always arms himself against all mollification on the human side by declining to accept your hospitality; social intercourse, and the good fellowship that is engendered by repeated pegs, might divert him from the straight path of painful duty, and he therefore prefers to dislodge

the rats and the bats and the pariah dogs that ordinarily inhabit an inspection bungalow. It is probably this sacrifice of personal comfort to manly independence that reacts on the inspected victim at every opportunity. The beau ideal of Inspecting Officers turns over your registers with an apparently uninterested air, and writes down whatever you tell him without troubling to verify it from the books before him. This type is, however, rare. As a rule, he is depraved enough to depute an advance agent to overhaul your registers for a week or more. Like that of the examiners and auditors of the Accounts Department—if the tradition regarding those tiresome interferers is true—this individual's merit is measured by the number of irregularities he detects, and this " spur to prick the sides of his intent " is constantly sharpened by practice. He is always a superior person, but your natural instincts must be suppressed in dealing with him. The best plan is to receive him with tacit recognition of his power for evil, and to instruct your Head Assistant to give him every facility. If the latter has the necessary tact and perspicacity, this conciliatory attitude may produce

a good effect ; if not, a sufficiently long rope will sometimes result in the proverbial hanging by wearying the Inspecting Officer with a mass of trivial detail. Not unoften, however, all your arts are of no avail. The principal unblushingly appropriates the fruits of his agent's industry and triumphantly incorporates the results of the latter's researches in his own notes.

Of all Inspecting Officers, the youthful one is perhaps the most fearsome. Though not sufficiently important to sport a clerical precursor, he is either teaching himself at the expense of others, or has not outlived the persuasion that greatness may be achieved by an infinite capacity for taking pains. His zeal savours of the new broom and his self-confidence is stupendous ; in addition, he is usually unable to differentiate between the very few things that matter and the countless number that may safely be neglected without endangering the stability of the British administration.

While undergoing the process of inspection, it is as well to be present in person as far as possible. Your clerks are apt to become petrified with awe, and the halting answer that is really a compliment to the

dignity of the Inspecting Officer is then liable to be misconstrued as gross ignorance or deliberate deceit. Anyone with experience of Indian life is aware of the marvellous ingenuity and wonderful facility that domestic servants habitually display in framing excuses; this faculty is worthy of intelligent study and should be cultivated for encounters with Inspecting Officers to the extent of making ready replies to all questions. An incorrect answer is better than none at all; the question that evokes it is frequently aimless and, in any event, a gentle lie turneth away inquiry. Though the text-books say that inspections are intended to serve the purpose of instruction rather than criticism, and that all defects should be rectified on the spot, these counsels of perfection are not ordinarily observed. Like the text and margin of Sheridan's "beautiful quarto page," a typical inspection note contains a rivulet of instruction meandering through a meadow of criticism, while a correspondence of six months is quite commonly initiated with a careless remark. Such, however, are the ways by which most Inspecting Officers justify their existence and conscientiously earn their

travelling allowance. Arguments during an inspection are, as a rule, a waste of everybody's time ; unless you can establish your point at once by rule, order, or authoritative precedent, you " may as soon go kindle fire with snow, as seek to quench " an Inspecting Officer's infallibility " with words." Remember rather that the critical and the unamiable moods are usually synchronous, and avoid all risk of being " tax'd for speech." Remember also that the critical appetite grows with feeding, and be prepared for comment on the condition of your horse, the contents of your library, and the disposition of your garden. Remember finally that " a jest's prosperity lies in the ear of him that hears it," and laugh heartily at chestnuts and facetious remarks, even if the latter are at your expense.

Though, like Bernard Shaw, Inspecting Officers possess " in an unrivalled degree the gift of being unpleasant," they are not entirely without their advantages. Clever as you may think yourself, they always have more experience and, what is more important, carry greater authority. Points of practice and procedure that have perplexed you in the course of your daily work

may be readily resolved at inspections, and it is a good plan to launch such problems just as the Inspecting Officer reaches a register about which you are shaky. If he is worth his salt, he will rise to the occasion, and you will gain information on one point, while you avoid exposure on another. Further, material mistakes and omissions are occasionally detected by an Inspecting Officer, as in the classic instance where a District Magistrate found that a subordinate magistrate, in order to improve the appearance of his returns, was issuing warrants on all witnesses whom he felt disinclined to examine on their first appearance in answer to the usual summons. Though you may know that " it is a good divine that follows his own instructions," and that it is easier to " teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty " so taught, you should receive the Inspecting Officer's precepts on such points in a proper spirit of humility, which need not, however, exclude a reserved resolve to make things uncomfortable for the clerk responsible. In fine, follow the advice of Madame Dubarry who, though with a somewhat different meaning, is represented

by Dumas as saying to Louis XV on a certain occasion at Luciennes : " Let us use, not abuse." If, having received extreme provocation, the temptation proves too strong, let it find expression with the small boy's consoling reflection that, when he is a prefect, he will make the little beggars sit up.

THE MUKHTEAR AS CHAMBER-COUNSEL.

THE MUKHTEAR.

'Tis said that common sense and law
Not often are allied,
And, when the Mukhtear's on the jaw,
This truth's exemplified.

THE Mukhtear belongs to the younger-son branch of the prolific legal family in which the barrister, the *vakil* and the pleader represent the senior and more affluent branches. His social standing is not elevated, and it is not uncommon for some unclothed cultivator to claim consideration confidently on the ground that his brother is a Mukhtear of the Court concerned. In former days, anybody could be a Mukhtear ; " there were no rules of admission, and any person passing by the Court might turn in and attempt to make an honest penny by pleading, if he could secure a client and present a power to appear written on a stamped paper of the value of one shilling." Nowadays, the Mukhtear must be educated up to the modern " Matriculation " of the Calcutta University, in which at least sixty per cent of the candidates achieve a first

class, and he must possess the professional qualification conferred by an examination conducted under the auspices of the Calcutta High Court. His personal demeanour is usually a curious mixture of independence and servility, the independence being fathered by a faint glimmering of the dignity of his calling, and cherished by the comfortable feeling that the " Hon'ble High Court " is his palladium against executive *zulum*, while the servility is born of a *nolens volens* recognition that his livelihood is largely dependent on his relations with the magistracy. Further, like the unelevating novel of the day, the supply of Mukhtears exceeds the demand, and the appearance of the superfluous product suggests the reflection that his laundry bill is not an important item in his domestic budget. This gentleman supplies the lack of legitimate occupation in one or more of several ways. He is generally deeply involved in the local intrigues of party faction, but he may also be acting as the captious correspondent of some vernacular newspaper, or acquiring a useful reputation as a resourceful writer of anonymous petitions. As a *pis aller*, he stands security and offers bail for people of

even less credit than himself at a trifling charge of five per cent.

The Mukhtear's chambers are located on the verandah of a small hut which may, or may not, be the ante-chamber of his private apartments. For various reasons, of which economy of time is not one, he would prefer to have his office attached to his residence. It is, however, essential, from a strategic standpoint, that his place of business should be situated at the side of a public road, in order that clients *in esse* may find him easily and clients *in posse* be solicited to the best advantage. Other things being equal, and they are usually equally bad, his position improves, and his opportunities for practice widen, as he gets further out, and it is thus generally possible, by observing the area from which a particular Mukhtear's clients are drawn, to fix the high road along which his office is placed. There,

> "With books and money plac'd for show,
> Like nest-eggs to make clients lay,
> And for his false opinion pay,"

he sits on a dirty mat, wrapped in a cloth that has seen better days, and awaits his customers for all the world like the merchant

of Venus in another part of the town. As they come along discussing their grievances with characteristic candour, he hails them with a supreme disregard for professional etiquette, and offers his invaluable services at an inconsiderable price.

One school of political economists holds that the labour of all lawyers is unproductive, but the Mukhtear, though he is certainly a parasite, is most prolific in one respect—the propagation of litigation. The cases that he fathers are quite as numerous as those that are naturally generated by some legal cause of action. Under his paternal solicitude, an exchange of abuse develops speedily into a one-sided assault, and, if the Court considers assaults venial without visible signs of their effects, he will even manufacture the missing marks with a minimum amount of corporal inconvenience. He is, however, seen at his best when his creative faculties have virgin material to operate on. His client contributes nothing except a lively sense of his own liability for some illegal action, and it is the Mukhtear's function to convert the aggressor into the aggrieved and concoct the spurious story that is considered the most effective

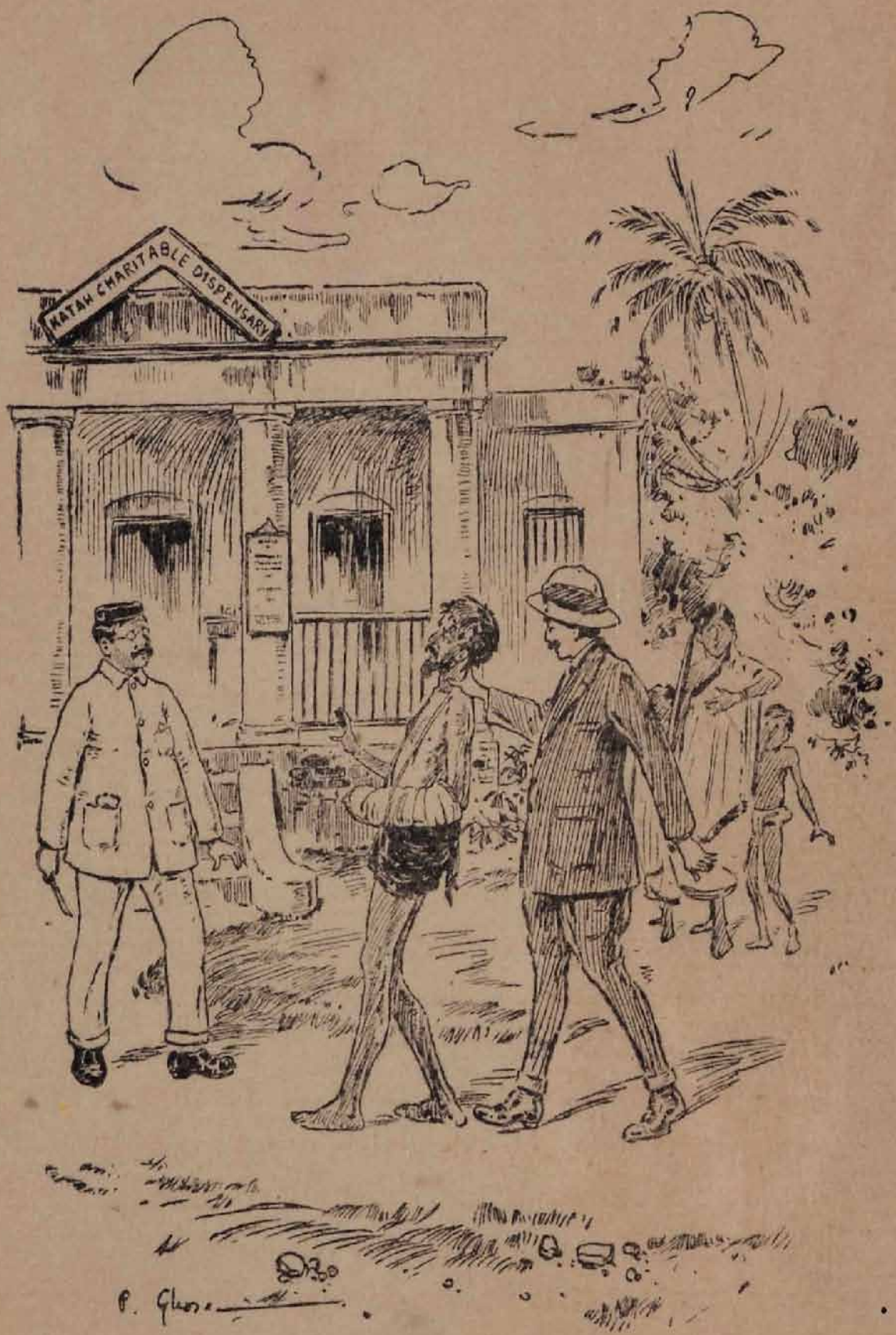
counter that can be made to a criminal complaint. Like the poet, his imagination "bodies forth the forms of things unknown," while his pen "turns them to shapes" in a petition of complaint. Provided only with a fickle foundation of adverse fact, he draws on a fertile imagination for the bricks of a comparatively unstable edifice intended merely to weather summary demolition at the complaint stage. Sufficient for the day is the evil done thereon, however, and he knows that the mortar of evidence necessary to make his building more durable is as inexpensive and as plentiful as dirt. Fortunately for the interests of justice, from whose blind eyes such artistic structures would be too often hidden, the ignorance that induces confidence in the Mukhtear's methods often betrays them also. The coached client of imperfect understanding and uncertain memory commonly contradicts his written petition under oral examination, and is then easily convinced by his legal mentor that the dismissal of his complaint is due entirely to his own shortcomings.

Sometimes, as the Schoolmen said, *fortis imaginatio generat casum*, and sometimes

also a case is true *ab initio*. The Mukhtear then appears in Court in all the glory of his natural element. If he is engaged for the prosecution, he knows exactly what each witness is to say and has informed them exactly what they are not to say. If he is on the accused's side, he has made himself fully acquainted with the characters and past history of the prosecution witnesses and has ascertained precisely why each of them is supporting the complaint. His business instincts being irreproachable, he does not in fact actually appear until his day's fees have been handed over; this little detail settled, however, he proceeds to business in what is, he fondly imagines, the most approved style. With the "politic melancholy" that, according to the observant Jaques, pertains to lawyers, he subtly conveys the impression that the presiding magistrate is a veritable "Daniel come to judgment," and thinks that he helps his cause by anticipating the latter's possible elevation to the judicial dignity of "Your Lordship." His legal lore is eclectic, but is seldom to the point; he knows most of the conventional *clichés* of professional phraseology, but is ordinarily unable to

apply them correctly ; he is usually an acute, if somewhat meticulous, cross-examiner, but is apt to waste his energies on irrelevancies. His respect for authority being unbounded—particularly when it is on his side—he is entirely unable to appreciate the frame of mind that declines to accept a High Court *obiter dictum* as conclusive and even looks askance at a ruling containing more law than common sense. His ideas of evidence are summed up in the undying Dogberry's deduction : "It is proved already that you are little better than false knaves, and it will go near to be thought so shortly." His rhetoric is, however, his strongest point. Like the love of Julia, "the more thou damm'st it up, the more it burns," though, to change the simile, it is apt to rise like a rocket, but fall like the stick. The so-called "arguments," which both sides are entitled to inflict on the magistrate at the close of a case, supply the Mukhtear with a grand opportunity for displaying his capabilities and, incidentally, for vindicating himself in the eyes of his client if judgment should go against him. The more he talks, the more are his client and his audience impressed, and

the more are they persuaded that only the grossest lack of sympathy could withstand such eloquence. The impression actually made on the magistrate is, however, somewhat different, and generally amounts to a strong temptation to exclaim, in the words of Falstaff, "thou hast damnable iteration." The style is tumid and the language ornate, as when the opposite party's version of the facts is witheringly characterised as "the most hyperbolic ludicrousness;" the divagations are frequent and are apt to be prolonged unless they are rudely interrupted; the reasoning is full of fallacies, both paralogistic and sophistic; and the *tout ensemble,* enriched by the talented touch that can "distinguish and divide a hair twixt south and south-west side," induces the impression that, like Sir Nathaniel in *Love's Labour Lost,* and with equal futility, the Mukhtear "draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument."



THE DOCTOR BABU WELCOMES A PATIENT.

THE DOCTOR BABU.

If you catch a chill, or feel otherwise ill,
Avoid the Doctor's medical skill ;
If at the door of death you lie,
Dismiss the Doctor and vivify.

DOCTORS are as plentiful in Bengal as are dentists in America or anarchists in Russia. The professional qualifications of a compounder with a few months' experience are comparatively superior, and there is as yet no criterion by which the swans can be distinguished from the geese. The latter are as common and as cheap as false witnesses, and their effect on the cases they are engaged in is usually equally disastrous. Their definiteness in diagnosis is as remarkable as their uncertainty in cure, and they are most correctly classified as killers of tens, hundreds and thousands respectively. The Doctor Babu must, however, be differentiated from such pernicious practitioners. It used to be said that he qualified himself for a professional career by sleeping on a medicine chest for a single night, but that gibe is no longer even a facetious inexactitude. If employed under Government, he

rejoices in the imposing designation of Sub-Assistant Surgeon, and his qualifications may include the degree of L.M.S. which does not always stand for Licensed Man Slayer ; if employed under a local authority like a District Board or a Municipality, his appointment must receive the *imprimatur* of the medical authorities, with whom it is a *sine qua non* that his diploma should emanate from an institution recognized by Government. His supreme contempt for all private practitioners, and particularly for " homeopaths " and " quacks," is therefore intelligible, but, while it is usually justified so far as the latter are concerned, its " scornful perspective " is apt to warp his judgment of the former class and to lead him to the position of Molière's physician, who believed that it was better to die than to be cured by unorthodox methods.

The Doctor Babu holds charge of a usually well equipped dispensary where diseases are diagnosed and treatment supplied free of all authorised charges. In dealing with respiratory complaints and stomachic disorders, he is full of the experience that " is by industry achieved and perfected by the swift course of time."

Under such circumstances, it is surprising that the cultivating classes do not carry all their ailments to the numerous charitable dispensaries that are dotted over the country at convenient centres. The upper classes do not resort to these *maisons de santé* because they can, as a rule, afford to pay for treatment at their own homes, and because, even where they are unable to do so, their women cannot appear in public and their men will not accept assistance on eleemosynary lines. But why do not the lower classes take advantage of the free dispensaries in far larger numbers? As one often sees only women and children in attendance, it is possible that the adult cultivator may believe, with Plutarch, that "a man of thirty is his own physician or a fool;" or, being a confirmed fatalist, he may think, with Olivia, that "what is decreed must be," and that no doctor can help him if death by disease is written on his forehead; or, being also a "simple Simon," he may be happily gulled by the wiles of quacks who profess, like Christian Scientists, to "charm ache with air and agony with words;" or finally, being *au fond* a profound philosopher as well, he may

agree with the Duke in *Measure for Measure* that life "is a thing that none but fools would keep," and share Dryden's view that it is

> "Better to hunt in fields for health unbought,
> Than fee the doctor for a nauseous draught."

These interesting speculations must, however, give place to more authentic answers to the question propounded above. *Imprimis* comes the characteristic Oriental distrust of any proposition that purports to give something for nothing. The inevitable conclusion is that the "something" cannot be worth having and, in this case, it finds expression in the general belief that the medicines given at the dispensaries are bad. The servants of an official will always ask for a chit when sent to the Doctor Babu for treatment, and, if asked why a chit should be necessary, will say that, without it, they would not be supplied with good medicine. Though this idea has, as a rule, no foundation in fact, cases have been known where the Doctor Babu used the "Europe medicines" belonging to the dispensary for the benefit of his private patients, and replaced them by comparatively inferior bazaar

drugs. The greatest deterrent is, however, the fear of a surgical operation, a branch of medical science that, according to Indian opinion, pertains more properly to the profession followed by the Shibli Bagarag who shaved Shagpat. The Doctor Babu is of course above such popular beliefs ; the performance of a major operation is a distinction much coveted by him, and there is probably good ground for the impression that, like Van Scolpvelt of pious memory, he is inclined to operate unnecessarily in minor cases also in order to save himself the trouble of treatment. A *raiyat*, who has a small sore on the hand, will therefore prefer to apply some filthy mess that often introduces septic matter into his system with gruesome results ; even when gangrene has set in, and amputation is the only means of saving his life, he has to be practically driven to a dispensary and steadily refuses to believe that compulsion is being used for his own benefit. So far as *mofassil* dispensaries are concerned, his attitude cannot be altogether condemned. The Doctor Babu often prefers to perform his operations on the floor, even if his dispensary boasts an up-to-date operating

table scientifically drained and heated; he is sometimes indifferent to the necessity of sterilizing his instruments; and, though he does not perhaps go as far as the famous Dr. Sangrado in *Gil Blas*, who said it was "a gross error to suppose that blood is necessary to life," he considers that a little additional loss of blood is a matter of no great moment. Further, in dressing wounds, he often appears to take a callous delight in causing pain, and generally conveys the impression that he is performing a disagreeable duty which the unfortunate victim had no business to impose on him. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that the Doctor Babu is handicapped, both in humanity and in efficiency, by the mental attitude of his patient. Even in Montaigne's day, physicians believed that their chances of success were directly proportionate to the faith their patients had in them, and the Indian cultivator does not attempt to conceal the fact that his belief in the Doctor Babu entirely fails to prepossess him with the assurance of a cure. He thus loses all claims to consideration and almost forfeits his right to be healed. Further, though the Doctor Babu shares

with all followers of the art of Æsculapius the advantage that his successes survive to bear witness to his skill, while his failures disappear speedily and finally, he cannot ordinarily recommend, as a practical remedy, that change of air which is the ultimate refuge of the embarrassed physician in other climes.

In dealing with epidemics, the Doctor Babu exemplifies the truth of Shakespeare's observation that "to do" is not "as easy as to know what were good to do." Small-pox and cholera are endemic everywhere and readily assume epidemic form under the slightest encouragement. The Doctor Babu is well aware of the protective value of vaccination, but will never enjoin, much less enforce, it. He knows the measures that should be taken as soon as an outbreak of cholera occurs, but he will not disinfect a well, or have a tank reserved for drinking-water, until he is stirred up by an executive officer with a greater sense of responsibility. As for fumigating a dwelling, or burning the bedding used by a cholera patient, such drastic steps are apt to be unpopular and would, besides, nip a promising bloom of practice in the bud.

The Doctor Babu's connection with the *Kacheri* is close, particularly at the head-quarters of a subdivision. If a watchful eye is not kept on his proceedings, he will make quite a respectable income by granting certificates to complainants for injuries which are invisible to a layman, and by dressing such injuries artistically and impressively at the public expense. In the graver forms of crime, such as murder and grievous hurt, to say nothing of rape and other cognate offences, the medical evidence is often the decisive factor in the fate of the accused. The Doctor Babu performs the *post mortem* or examines the *corpus delicti*, as the case may require, and must then give evidence as to the nature and probable cause of the injuries found by him. He comes into court fully conscious of his individual importance to the cause of justice and, as a rule, deposes satisfactorily in the interests of that cause. He is, however, often over-sensitive about perfectly legitimate questions in cross-examination calculated to disparage his professional knowledge or skill, and, being psychologically unconscious of ignorance, he is apt to be lured into incautious and damaging opinions. He is always

ready to air his technical knowledge, and nothing pleases him better than an opportunity of exposing the limitations of a layman in this respect. If the Court asks how such a word as "ecchymosis" or "euonymin" is spelt, he will proceed, in a most annoying manner, to spell out every technical term that he has occasion to use, or can contrive to introduce, in the course of his evidence. Again, a magistrate, or even a judge for that matter, may be pardoned if he has to enquire what an "abortifacient preparation" or an "alkaloidal irritant" is, or if he should be uncertain as to the precise position of the "pericardium," the "parietal region," or the "solar plexus," but the Doctor Babu usually gives him information on such points with a superior smile, and tempts him to demonstrate on the spot that, as Montaigne says, "what we think we know is but a piece, and a very little one, of our ignorance."

ONE OF THE NAZIR BABU'S " WORKS."

THE NAZIR BABU.

Regarding the Nazir, the notion convey'd
Depends on the point from which he's survey'd ;
A baleful blight, a wretched wight,
A willing, though un-Ariel, sprite.

THE Nazir Babu is the Cinderella of the *Kacheri*. He has indeed certain definite duties and responsibilities, but he is also required to do any odd job that does not fall specifically within the functions of any other ministerial officer. In addition, his extra-official obligations, which he accepts as a matter of course and discharges without reward, are infinite in extent and variety. In a word, he "plays many parts" all at once and is

"A man so various that he seems to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome."

If the Collector has visions of his son as a dashing cavalry officer in a crack corps, he charges the Nazir Babu with the selection of the Rosinante-like tât on which, attended by at least three gorgeous *chaprássis*, the young hopeful receives his first

lessons in the equestrian art, and unconsciously acquires the correct military seat on an animal that can only walk or amble. If the Collector's wife is the victim of one of those frequent tragedies of up-country life, and has to return purchases to some Calcutta firm because, in spite of their belated arrival by value-payable post, they only correspond remotely with the alluring descriptions in an *ad captandum* catalogue, the Nazir Babu is called in to sew up the parcel in office oil-cloth and despatch it under a profuse panoply of *Sarkári* seals. The Joint Magistrate deputes him to discover all the likely snipe grounds within five miles of the station, while the Joint's wife uses him as a salutary check on a rapacious cook by requiring him to report regularly the market rates for *murgis* which, rudely disguised in the protean forms of *réchauffé*, are the staple food of Europeans in the *mofassil*. The Assistant Magistrate who is transferred with the usual considerate amount of notice, and who, being a mere bachelor of modest means, only has furniture which he dare not offer to sell to his friends, directs the Nazir to auction his effects or remove them, in as

complete a state as possible, before his successor arrives. The impecunious European Deputy, who ordinarily bids a touching farewell to the last rupee of his salary about the fifth of each month, ekes out an uncertain existence for the remaining period on advances made by the obliging Nazir. Every Inspecting Officer has him at his beck and call, and any other stray official who has business in the interior of the district demands numerous carts at once, if not sooner, and expects the Nazir to make arrangements to send on his *dâk* and keep him supplied with the soda water which, used for purposes of dilution, helps to while away the long and lonely evenings in camp.

These multifarious and heterogeneous "works," as the Nazir loves to call them, all of which take precedence of his *ex-officio* responsibilities both in his own estimation and in that of the individual concerned, are at least equalled in number and character by the legitimate duties that he is paid to discharge. All the furniture in the *Kacheri* is in his charge, and he is always made liable for any breakage, loss or theft, which he cannot conclusively bring home to the person

responsible. As there are not unoften office almirahs in the Collector's bedroom, office chairs in the Joint's bathroom, office tables in the 'Stant's dining-room, and office *darris* in the Deputy's drawing-room, this is apt to prove a difficult and delicate duty. These officials do not consider it necessary to give receipts for such articles, and the Nazir is becomingly diffident about demanding them. His somewhat precarious position is not, however, too much for his ingenuity ; he uses it to account for the disappearance of other articles which have never been inside any officer's residence, knowing that even the most particular stock-taker, conscious of the office furniture that adorns his own bungalow, will not press for their production under such circumstances. In course of time, these fictions assume the authority of facts, and the Nazir Babu, by frequently repeating them, makes "a sinner of his memory to credit his own lie."

Inter multa alia, the Nazir Babu has control of the menial servants of the *Kacheri,* and is constantly being cautioned because the office sweeper has carelessly omitted to empty the Collector's waste-paper basket,

or has carefully swept out the Joint's Court after the latter's *chaprássi* has completed his daily dusting. If a *pankhá*-puller shows unmistakable signs of soporific tendencies, the Nazir's judgment in the selection of instruments is held to be at fault, and, by the same logical train of reasoning, he is called to account if one of the lights round the Treasury does not last all night. Similarly, the duty of winding up the numerous clocks in the *Kacheri* includes the obvious responsibility that each clock should correspond with the watch of the officer in whose room it is placed ; if there should be any difference, the Nazir is, quite naturally, required to ascertain which is correct by a personal reference to the time at the post office half a mile away. If, owing to the primitive condition of internal communications, the district boasts an elephant for the carriage of camp equipage, the Nazir Babu has to see it fed personally morning and evening (it being remembered that an elephant's meal is not based on tabloid principles nor conducted on American-lunch lines), and he is certain to encounter trouble if, owing to the *mahout's* machinations, the animal is attacked by some mysterious complaint

just when it is required for a long march. Such are a few of the Nazir Babu's miscellaneous official duties which, like his extra-official obligations, are performed in the spare time afforded by other functions that are, at any rate nominally, his *raison d'être.*

As Nazir, he is in charge of the process-serving department. Swift's observation about "fleas and lesser fleas and so *ad infinitum*" is specially applicable to Indian conditions, and the process-serving peon is one of the most pernicious of such parasites. It is a melancholy truth that, with the policeman, he is the most familiar embodiment of the *Sarkár* in most rural tracts, where he preys on the people more or less openly on the personally satisfactory principle of "heads I win and tails you lose." If he serves a summons, or executes a distress warrant, on an individual who does not make it worth his while to find him absent, this is counted to his credit in the monthly reckoning of his work which forms the basis of reward or punishment. If, on the contrary, the individual in question is prepared to pay sufficiently, he returns the summons or warrant with a report that the addressee cannot be traced, having taken

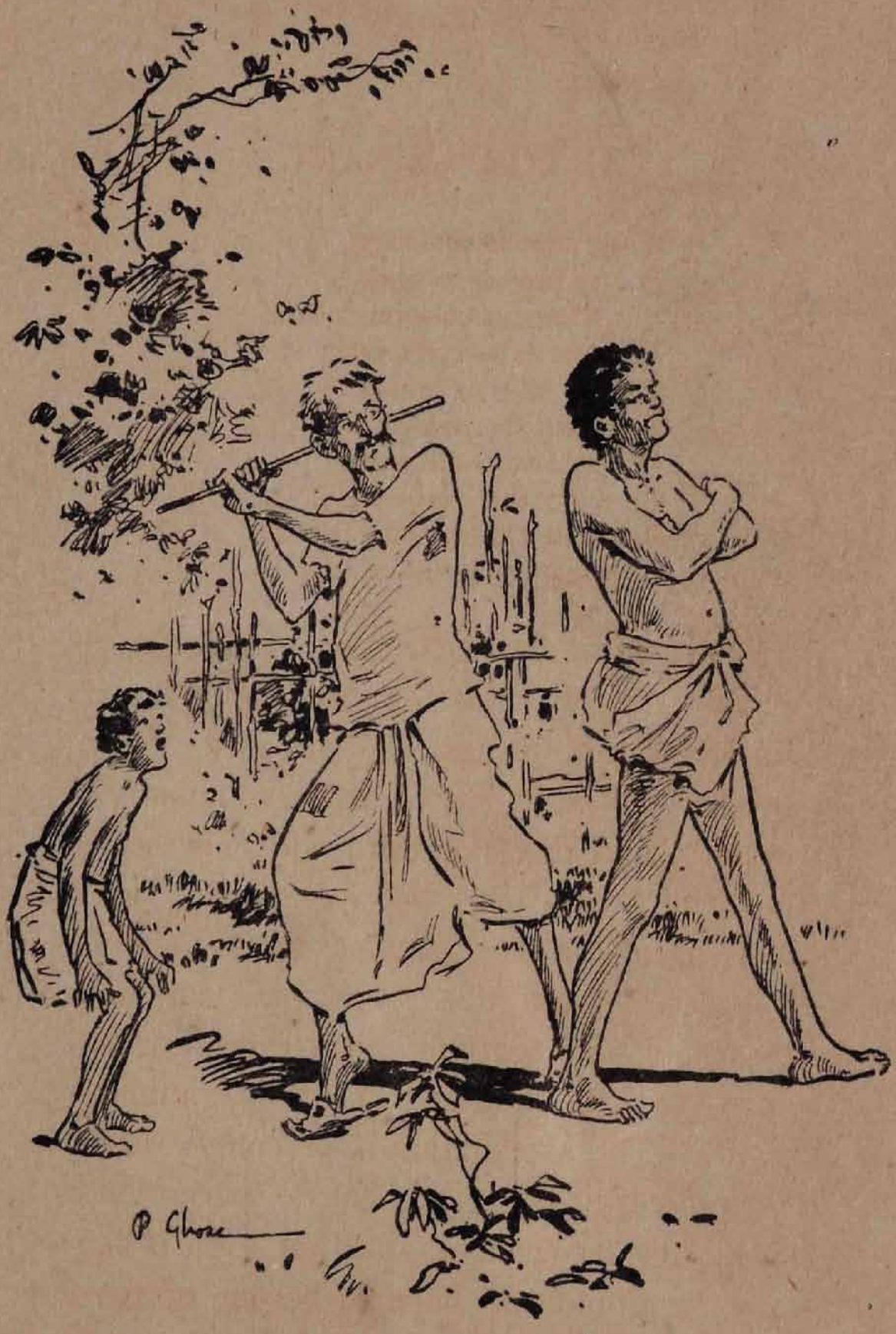
care that the consideration exceeds the fine that may be imposed on him if his percentage of personal service does not reach the required minimum. In addition, he always lives at the expense of the parties while in the interior, and is generally more than "passing rich" on his salary of six or seven rupees a month, the most important factor in this prosperity being his *chaprás*, or badge of office, by means of which "the world is still deceived with ornament." It is the Nazir Babu's principal duty to control these peons, but he usually shares in the pickings of the profession, and enforces his prescriptive right by so distributing processes that the intractable individual finds that he has to cover three hundred miles in twenty days, while the more amenable one does only half that distance in the same time. The application of this vindicatory sanction gives the Nazir Babu a most superior geographical knowledge and enables him to state, more correctly and more expeditiously than any official compilation, the position and distance from headquarters of any particular village.

The Nazir Babu is also the petty cashier of the *Kacheri*. He holds the Collector's

permanent advance and looks after what is technically known as contingent expenditure. Every *Kacheri* has an annual grant for contingencies, and it is the Nazir's business to see, not only that this grant is not exceeded, but also that it is completely spent. Like all Orientals, the Nazir Babu will " cavil on the ninth part of a hair " in a personal bargain, but this naturally frugal mind is not in evidence where the interests of official expenditure are concerned. He will thus cheerfully propose to pay a local carpenter the same rates for furniture as are entered in a Calcutta catalogue for a considerably superior article, and is reproachfully silent if it is suggested that there must be some commission for him on the transaction.

The Nazir Babu's personal appearance is almost invariably an index of the material prosperity he enjoys. He belies Shakespeare's dictum that " fat paunches have lean pates," but, as it would be physically impossible for anyone without an equable temperament to retain his position for long, he confirms, albeit negatively, the modern physiological doctrine that strong emotions prejudicially affect digestion. It is certainly

difficult to imagine the Nazir Babu suffering from emotional dyspepsia, and one feels sure that he has few of the "unquiet meals" that "make ill-digestions." He is, as a rule, absolutely unmethodical and has no conception of Pope's precept about order being Heaven's first law. Engaged in "dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood" after nightfall, with the flickering flame of a cheap hurricane lantern to assist him, and with numberless files of apparently muddled and disconnected papers to hinder him, it is hard to say whether the Nazir Babu arouses more commiseration than admiration, or more disgust than either. The confusion among his papers sometimes extends to his mind, and his explanations of mistakes of omission and commission then only "make the fault worse by the excuse." When everything has been said against him, however, the undeniable fact remains that the Nazir Babu is practically indispensable, and that, without his versatility, resource and energy, the *Kacheri* would have to shut its doors within a week or become a home for impotent administrators.



THE COMPLAINANT IN THE MAKING.

THE COMPLAINANT.

A picturesque complaint
Is easy enough to paint,
But when the colouring quaint
Discloses falsehood's taint,
It leads to grim restraint;
And then the resident
Of quarters free of rent,
By arguments pertinent,
Learns not to misrepresent
Or employ embellishment.

EXPERIENCE shows that, on an average, one out of every three complaints filed in a *Kacheri* can be dismissed summarily, that another can be dismissed after preliminary enquiry, and that the third will only end in a conviction once in five times. The odds against a complainant are therefore considerable, and it is *prima facie* curious that he should continue to carry his grievances by the hundred to the criminal courts. The explanation is of course that the ordinary complainant has no conception of his slender chances, and that, even if he had, he would still hope to be one of the fortunate few on the same principle of human nature that leads more sophisticated

individuals to investments in lottery tickets. "The law is the lottery of lotteries," said Judge Bridlegoose, and he ought to have known, since, according to Rabelais, "he never presumed to decide any case except by a throw of the dice." The complainant who has legitimate cause for resort to a criminal court is comparatively uncommon, the large majority being actuated by motives other than the just and lawful vindication of an injury. "Every why hath a wherefore," and the "wherefores" of such complainants are commensurate, both in number and variety, with "the many faces that falsehood hath."

The largest class comprises those who attempt to have a dispute of a purely civil nature tried in the criminal courts. The latter are cheaper than the civil courts, their procedure is simpler and far more expeditious, and the latent sanction of loss of liberty confers considerably greater authority on their decisions. A complainant of this class tries to bring pressure to bear on a recusant debtor by accusing him of some misdemeanour, such as misappropriation or breach of trust, or endeavours to enforce an amicable settlement of a disputed

succession by charging a rival claimant with theft of part of the property concerned. The commonest specimen is, however, the complainant who seeks a decision regarding the possession of cultivated land on the strength of documentary evidence which, at most, establishes title. A civil suit for declaration of title and recovery of possession would be a comparatively expensive business, and he therefore boldly accuses the individual in actual possession of cutting a crop which belongs to the latter by the indefeasible right of having sown or transplanted it. He puts in his title-deeds with his complaint and, unless a reliable local enquiry can be made, often succeeds in securing a summons against the alleged offender. No less an authority than a High Court Judge has said that, in India, " the only willing witness is the false witness and the personally-interested witness," and, if this is true in cases of crime affecting the whole community, it is *à fortiori* true in land disputes where no communal interests are involved. Every witness in such cases is either hired or, directly or indirectly, self-seeking. The latter are usually discredited in cross-examination, and the

former, engaged for a trifling consideration and carefully coached, generally constitute therefore the principal oral evidence on which both sides rely to establish possession. Homer knew that "there is everywhere enough liberty of arguing, both for and against, on both sides," and all *mofassil* magistrates know that there is, as a rule, very little in the depositions of the witnesses to indicate on which side the truth lies in a land dispute. By a little exaggerated emphasis on the discrepancies in the evidence of one side, accompanied by a little judicious nodding over the weak points in that of the other, it would generally be possible to write an equally good judgment on either side. When the ancient Areopagites were perplexed, they directed the parties to appear again after a hundred years, but the modern magistrate is denied this delightful device and usually has to depend on fortuitous instinct. In such circumstances, documentary evidence is apt to turn the scale and secure the triumph of chicanery over *bonâ fides*. The layman may perhaps think that no great harm is done if the successful litigant is legally entitled to the land, especially as it is to

the interest of everyone that there should be an end to litigation. But this argument, while it ignores the important legal distinction between ownership and possession, also indicates a sad lack of knowledge of the subordinate civil courts, where collusive cases are extraordinarily common, and where *ex parte* decrees are easily obtained by comparatively small investments in the process-serving department. The securing of symbolical, or even actual, possession on such decrees is similarly simple, and does not necessarily involve any transfer transaction on the land itself. It has, in fact, happened before now that the same civil court has given possession of the same land to two different persons within a month or two, neither suit having been between the same parties. The criminal courts therefore generally decline to entertain any complaint that betrays a civil flavour and, at a later stage, refuse to regard as relevant any civil court orders that are not strictly *inter partes*. Criminal cases of this type are usually concluded on the *uti possedetis* principle, and are merely preliminary skirmishes for position to determine which party will have to assume the rôle of

plaintiff in the civil court, and bear both the *onus probandi* and the cost of court-fees.

The complainant who wishes to use the machinery of the criminal courts to attain some private end, appears fairly frequently under various specious guises, and subsequent trouble may often be avoided by settling his little affair without taking cognizance of his complaint. A typical example is the man whose wife is paying an unduly prolonged visit to her own family and showing little inclination, if not decided disinclination, to return to her lawful spouse. He complains that, at a comparatively recent date, his mother-in-law visited his house and kidnapped his minor wife with designs which are, he apprehends, either directly or indirectly, immoral. He libels his mother-in-law freely, but the absence of criminal intention is generally obvious, and a warning that the wife cannot expect any legal maintenance from her husband will usually curtail her sojourn unless there is some really strong reason for her reluctance to return. It is only natural that the girl-wife of India should hanker after her own home at first and be unwilling to come back to the uncongenial shelter of her husband's

hut, where an often shrewish mother-in-law rules the roost. In these matrimonial cases, the husband sometimes goes so far as to accuse some other man, who as often as not turns out to be a near relation of his wife, of enticing her away, with all her jewellery, for purposes about which he is emphatically unreticent. His only object, in any event, is to obtain a process that will frighten his relatives-in-law and enable him to effect a magnanimous compromise provided his wife is sent back. Another complainant of this class is the one who swears that some *mahájan* has stolen some property from him, the facts being that he has pledged the property with the accused who refuses to return it, though repayment of the consideration with full interest is tendered. If the accused does not admit the true state of affairs, he runs a real risk of being convicted and incurs the certainty of considerable expense; if he does so admit, his just dues are handed over in court, and the complainant is fully satisfied with the return of his property.

A third category of complainants comprises those who only complain in order to counter a true complaint against themselves. The strategic value of a counter-

complaint is fully appreciated in India, and, like a skilful general, an actual aggressor will often enhance its moral effect by getting in his complaint before the really aggrieved individual has collected the necessary funds for the purpose. The gentlemen of the long robe commonly collaborate in the concoction of such complaints, and experience enables them to produce some most artistic efforts. Unfortunately for them, it is not a case of *arcades ambo* in the Byronic sense, the average complainant of this class usually giving the game away by the psittacine patness of his deposition. A little cross-examination as to details then causes a collapse, and, like a stumped schoolboy seeking inspiration from the ceiling, the complainant first looks askance at his Mukhtear and, his invention being even weaker than his memory, finally flounders into hopeless discrepancy. Occasionally, however, when a little Spartan resolution in receiving a *láthi* blow has lent verisimilitude to an imaginary assault, the desired impression that both sides are to blame is induced. The actually aggrieved party must then usually accept the situation, and consent to the withdrawal of his

complaint as a *quid pro quo* to the abandonment of the charge against himself. It is all part of the glorious uncertainty of law, and the object-lesson teaches him to rely on his own right arm in future difficulties.

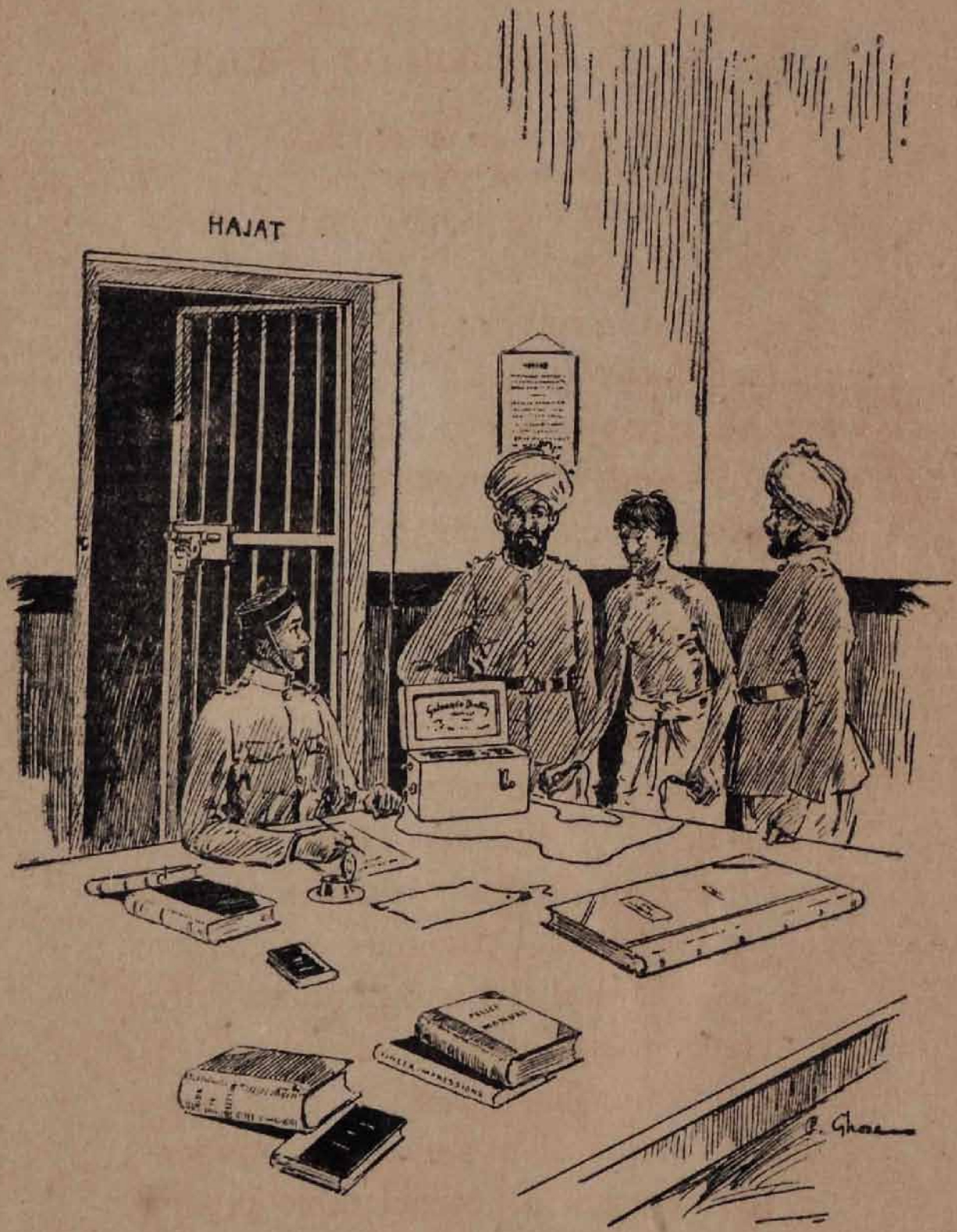
There are various other species of complainants whose appearances do not perhaps attract so much attention by their frequency, though some of them are quite as remarkable in other ways. There is, for example, the complainant who rushes into court on little or no provocation. He alleges a more or less serious assault, but has no marks, and finds his complaint dismissed as frivolous. Quarrels between children, followed by mutual abuse between their respective relations and friends, are a fruitful source of trivial complaints, which can, however, be summarily disposed of under that useful section by which nothing is an offence that causes harm so slight that no person of ordinary sense and temper would complain of it. The fine flow of language, and the complete command of abusive epithets, exhibited by an angry woman of low caste may compel one's admiration, but does not ordinarily justify a complaint of defamation.

The female complainant of this class is, however, the most difficult of all to deal with as a rule. She is an adept at *ad miseracordiam* appeal, and her advent is always marked by disturbing sobs that are intended to arouse compassion, but only succeed in exciting disgust. She considers it quite unnecessary, if she does not intimate that it is a personal affront, that she should be required to make a solemn affirmation as to the truth of her complaint. After these preliminary difficulties have been surmounted, she proceeds to convey her grievance incoherently in a shrill and discordant tone, and, if her story betrays flaws of improbability under stress of examination, her eyes immediately "smell onions" and one feels sure that she "will weep anon," if she does not do so at once. She eventually leaves the court protesting vehemently against the dismissal of her complaint, and thenceforth cherishes a firm conviction that magistrates are unsympathetic brutes.

Like the learned commentator who discovers in the writings before him perfections that their author never perceived, and a richer sense than he ever intended, the

experienced magistrate reads between the lines of most of the complaints filed before him, and discovers in many a "plea so tainted and corrupt" the object that "obscures the show of evil." He knows that, like "the lunatic, the lover, and the poet," the complainant is often "of imagination all compact," and he soon realizes the truth of Montaigne's observation that human actions are inconstant and frequently the result of diverse motives unconnected with the nearest allied circumstances. Among other things, he learns that all is not human blood that is red, and also that a business-like bandage does not necessarily cover an open wound. In a word, though frequently found a fool by judges, he has to be a judge among fools, and must therefore continually look out for

> "The seeming truth which cunning times puts on,
> To entrap the wisest."



A SCIENTIFIC SUGGESTION FOR THE SUB-INSPECTOR.

THE SUB-INSPECTOR OF POLICE.

His critics urge faults of commission,
His officers those of omission,
But whatever they say, he continues his way
Indiff'rent to all admonition.

THE Sub-Inspector of to-day agrees with the mellifluous Gilbert that a policeman's life is not a happy one. Whether belonging to the old and obsolescent school in which the lessons of experience led to elevation from the ranks, or whether recruited on modern lines with education and family connections as criteria of fitness, he remains a *laudator temporis acti*. He recalls regretfully the halcyon days before people like "Padgett, M. P." discovered India, when the Daroga was an opulent power in the land and could handle criminals unhampered by legal technicalities and captious critics. He relates wistfully how the advent of a Daroga into a village was the cause of considerable commotion among the residents, and the occasion of considerable profit to that worthy official. He proudly quotes the Bengali writer who, in this connection, says: "From the Mahomedan inhabitants

were extorted fowls by the dozen and eggs by the score, while the Hindus gave large quantities of unboiled rice, pulses, vegetables, mustard oil and clarified butter." Such laudable recognition of deserving authority is ruefully compared with the conditions of these degenerate days, when all that can be hoped for is a few days' board and lodging at the expense of those interested in the particular matter under investigation, and perhaps, if the stars are propitious, some "unconsidered trifles" snapped up as opportunity offers. The Daroga of that "golden age" did everything thoroughly. When he searched a house, he removed the roof and levelled the walls, and, if these measures did not produce the desired result, he proceeded to dig up the floor to a depth of three feet or more. But the fashions of yesterday have, alas, become the improprieties of to-day! A search warrant must now be applied for, and cautious magistrates satisfied that the grounds for suspicion are adequate; the search must be conducted in the presence of generally unwilling witnesses, and with due regard to the convenience and feelings of the suspected householder; and even when, in spite of these

premonitory preliminaries, anything inculpatory is found, there is more than an even chance that the accused will allege, and at least one Court believe, that the *objet d'évidence* was introduced into the house on the person of the officer conducting the search.

Such changes in conditions, though deplorable, could perhaps be conformed to, but the so-called scientific system of crime detection is a more serious matter. Force is, the Sub-Inspector contends, the only argument that really appeals to the criminal mind, and fear is, correlatively, the only inducement that will make it unburden itself. The East, according to him, does not know the criminal who repents out of remorse; it only knows the man who glories in his offence, and the one who admits it because he has no other alternative, or because he hopes to receive some consideration for his confession. The Sub-Inspector therefore laments the discouragement, and consequent decay, of the gentle and persuasive art of extracting admissions by methods that are reminiscent of the immortal "Hudibras":—

> "Some have been beaten till they know
> What wood a cudgel's of by th' blow;
> Some kicked until they can feel whether
> A shoe be Spanish or neat's leather."

The comparatively educated Sub-Inspector is prepared to agree that confessions extracted by physical violence have rightly become anachronistic, but even he cannot understand why confessions obtained by strategy of a certain sort should also be regarded as out of date. He sees no reason why he should be required to be like Cæsar's wife, and instances the *massak* trick as a harmless and often efficacious manœuvre that can no longer be practised with impunity. Everybody knows that a *massak* is the cow or goatskin used by a *bhisti* for carrying water. Its quondam utility in the detection of crime is not, however, so well-known, the *modus operandi* having been somewhat as follows. A number of dacoits, against whom no direct evidence was forthcoming, were arrested on suspicion and taken to the police station. The Sub-Inspector and his satellites sat in a room between two other rooms, containing, respectively, the suspected criminals and a *massak* full of water in charge of two constables armed with *láthis*. One of the dacoits was ushered into the august presence of the Sub-Inspector, and, after being questioned *pro fôrma*, was passed on to the room containing the *massak* and the

constables. As soon as he entered, one constable proceeded to belabour the *massak* vigorously, while the other emitted the most piercing and agonizing yells his lungs could compass. Meanwhile, the Sub-Inspector was intimating to the next dacoit that the significant sounds he could hear indicated the castigation that obdurate silence must expect. This process generally had the necessary unloosening effect sooner or later, and the Sub-Inspector then received the information that led to the conviction of the malefactors, the protection of the public, and the promotion of his ingenious self. A few stalwarts still survive who, though they have learnt not to be crudely violent, have methods of eliciting information and encouraging communicativeness that would scandalize a certain section of the House of Commons. Feeding a suspect with sweetmeats, and then refusing him water until he speaks out, has ceased to be an esoteric device, but there are said to be other "Asian mysteries" into which the uninitiated cannot hope to penetrate.

In justifying such practices, more particularly in cases of organised and widespread

crime, the Sub-Inspector shows that he is an unconscious disciple of Bentham. It is better, he argues, that ten possibly innocent men should suffer a little bodily inconvenience, than that one guilty individual should continue to harry hundreds of other certainly innocent persons, and he is confident that political dacoities would not have assumed such alarming proportions, if the flower of Bengali youth had been subjected to a little old-fashioned handling at an early stage of their proceedings. The ordinary Sub-Inspector has no natural aptitude for detective work and, as he receives next to no real training in it, it is not surprising that he can never see a clue unless it is as obvious "as a nose on a man's face or a weathercock on a steeple." He knows that he cannot expect any useful assistance from the public, and he therefore still hankers after the methods that are said to have suppressed the Thugs. He agrees with the ancient philosophers that "a man must of necessity do wrong by retail, who would do right by gross, and injustice in little things, who would come to do justice in great," and he believes, with Mariana in *Measure for Measure*, that men "become

much more the better for being a little bad." In these circumstances, the more modern and moral principle, that public utility should not be purchased at the price of private injustice, makes but little progress in the police force, while the present attitude of the average Sub-Inspector towards the scientific exponents of observation and deduction is perhaps best conveyed by Sir Toby Belch's "unanswerable answer" to the self-complacent Malvolio : "Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale ?"

Though it is claimed that, in spite of the Sub-Inspector's unwillingness to co-operate, reformation in his methods of detecting crime is proceeding slowly, it is generally admitted that, like Cassius, he is still "much condemn'd to have an itching palm." In the good old days of yore, the complainant who was prepared to pay could have a petty offence produced as a cognizable crime under competent stage-management, while the accused who offered a sufficient consideration could have the evidence against him emasculated into legal impotency by skilful surgery. Such practices are, however, dangerous in these days of comparatively

closer supervision, and the Sub-Inspector therefore discreetly prefers to supplement his official stipend by levying subsidies on the strength of his latent power of harrassing and annoying inoffensive persons without emerging from the shelter of "the windy side of the law." He has been brought up on the Eastern idea that power is intended primarily for the benefit of its possessor, and he can quote Western authority for the doctrine that "they should take who have the power." Accordingly, when he is consulted in connection with the renewal of gun licenses, he naturally expects some reward from every licensee who is reported as a proper person to enjoy the privilege of possessing arms. Again, his opinion is necessary regarding the fitness of new *chaukidárs* for the rural police and, as this opinion is worth something to the person interested, it cannot, as an ordinary business proposition, be secured for nothing. Almost every landlord pays him a retaining fee, not necessarily for purposes of illegal protection, but merely to secure goodwill, while unnatural deaths furnish him with a fruitful source of income. Few people

realize how frequently Indian women of the lower classes commit suicide over trivial disagreements with their husbands, or come to an untimely end in getting rid of the inconvenient consequences of widow intrigues; further, many persons are accidentally drowned or struck by lightning, while a larger number succumb to snake bites received while asleep on the floor or while outside their huts at night. All such deaths are technically "unnatural," and it is a criminal offence for the family of the deceased to dispose of the body without an inquest. The Hindus, however, "consider it a great calamity and a great sin" if a corpse is not cremated within a few hours of death, and, in any event, will not keep it in the house over the night if they can possibly help themselves. This is a lucrative conjunction of circumstances for the Sub-Inspector. He threatens to delay his enquiry or, having made it, affects suspicion as to the cause of death and hints that a post-mortem examination may be necessary. Either course produces the desired *douceur*, and the latter attains handsome proportions if the death is really a suspicious one. Thus is the "stubborn bear" of authority "led

by the nose with gold," and, as the evidence is effectually destroyed immediately, little or no risk is involved. The practice of the profession to which Shylock was such a brilliant ornament sometimes supplies still another means of raising the Sub-Inspector's standard of comfort. Members of the money-lending fraternity are not registered in India, but the Sub-Inspector apparently anticipates some such legislative interference, and accordingly conducts his operations in the name of his wife, who is, for all other purposes, strictly *pardánashin*. In addition, he is careful to guard against all leakage of business secrets by conferring on his clients considerably more than the mere honour of being indebted to him.

In the discharge of his duties, the Sub-Inspector is not troubled by any false notions of modesty and refuses to believe that "we make foul the cleanness of our deservings when of ourselves we publish them." His self-conceit does not, however, rise to self-confidence, and he will always shirk responsibility if he can find anyone else prepared to assume it. His energy and resource in the detection of crime is only equalled by his practical interest in its prevention. Road

patrols, regular calls upon bad characters, co-operative meetings, and all similar preventive measures, are, he is persuaded, only devised by his superior officers to keep him out of mischief during his spare time. He therefore performs such duties perfunctorily—when he performs them at all—though he is willing to pander to departmental demands by diligently writing up the necessary registers in order to produce the impression on an Inspecting Officer that all is well. Such matters remain trivial details, however, and he continues to cherish the belief—and is not unoften encouraged to cherish it—that the percentage of convictions in his cases is the conclusive criterion of his abilities as a police officer. Generations of future Sub-Inspectors will join the great majority before he ceases to consider that his *raison d'être* is, first to accumulate money for the education of his sons, the marriage of his daughters, and the comparative leisure of his retirement, and, secondly, to secure convictions by any possible means in such cases as he may be able to send up for trial. The picture of a Sub-Inspector on pension is surely a pleasing one. He becomes the dictator of his native

village as a matter of course; he is protected by his quondam fellows if he wishes to deal directly with troublesome rivals, and he is profoundly respected by all superior officers for having survived the many pitfalls of a policeman's career. And there we may let him rest "as, after much turmoil, a blessed soul doth in Elysium."

THE RAIYAT AT HOME.

THE RAIYAT.

The Raiyat who lived in the "golden age,"
Did live in fear and dread,
For nothing belonged to him as his own,
Not even his wife or his head;
But the Raiyat who bears an alien yoke,
Can peacefully grow his bread,
And heap his hoard in a hole in the ground,
Until he's naturally dead.

THE *raiyat* is perhaps the most misunderstood person in all Asia. The picture most people are familiar with is that which paints him as a hopeless helot, wallowing in the depths of despair and ignorance, insensible to all the finer feelings that distinguish men from brutes, and shut off from most of the material amenities that make life worth living. This is, however, a misrepresentation which, where it is not deliberately depicted for propagandist purposes, illustrates the sad subjection of sense to sentiment. "To take a true measure of constancy, we must necessarily know what the suffering is," says Montaigne in his analytical mood, and a story that Plutarch has of Diogenes gives point to the quotation. He tells us that, while the philosopher, clothed

à la Nature, was embracing a figure of snow in the depth of winter as an exhibition of endurance, an unsympathetic mocker came along and asked whether he was feeling very cold. "Not at all," replied Diogenes. "Why, then," said the other, "what difficult and exemplary thing do you think you are doing in hugging that snow?" As the ordeal of Diogenes ceased to have any real merit when the absence of personal discomfort was exposed, so does the *raiyat* lose all claim to commiseration and consideration on the score of his hard lot, as soon as it is recognised that he takes it as a matter of course and has little or no conception of better things. As far as his experience carries him, he finds that poverty is pandemic, suffering sporadic, and independence practically invisible, and he is not therefore disturbed by that "apprehension of the good" that "gives but the greater feeling to the worse." Besides, have these alleged hardships of the *raiyat* any actual existence, or, if they do exist to some extent, are they not counteracted by other conditions that make them of comparatively small moment both, subjectively, to the *raiyat* and, objectively, to those who are sufficiently

interested in his welfare to make the enquiry? The truth about many things concerning India has recently been communicated to the world by the East India Association, but no one has yet divulged the truth regarding the Indian *raiyat*.

Considered corporally, he is, like most other human beings, a joint product of heredity and environment, but he is peculiar in that he begins to be identified physically with the external features of his environment almost as soon as he is born. When he is only a few days old, his mother smears him with mustard oil and exposes him to the rays of the sun on a cosy plank. This process of assimilation, supplemented by powers of resistance inherited from countless generations of wearers of "the shadow'd livery of the burnish'd sun," ensures effectual exemption from such concomitants of Indian life as sunstroke, heat apoplexy, and prickly heat. A little later, and as soon as he has eaten rice for the first time with considerable ceremony, the local Sidrophel determines his destiny from the stars and marks out on his horoscope the most auspicious times for the performance of social and religious rites, and for the undertaking of

journeys and similar hazardous ventures. This system obviously saves him all the anxiety and worry that is inseparable from enlightened scepticism on such matters, and, combined with the belief that the fate of every man is written on his forehead and cannot be avoided or altered, enables him to accept occasional prosperity stolidly and resign himself stoically to occasional misfortune. From his earliest childhood, the *raiyat* is clothed on a sensible principle that recognises no necessities up to a certain age and discards all superfluities and duplications after that age. He is not therefore affected by those mysterious changes in fashion that are apt to absorb the attention of more civilized individuals to the exclusion of more practical matters, and is able to controvert, without fear of cavil, the authority of Shakespeare's dictum that "the fashion wears out more apparel than the man." No importunate tailors dun him with bills that necessitate humiliating subterfuges or further extravagances, and moths and other insects find no sustenance among his wardrobe. Further, he wastes no time over the dreary process of dressing and undressing, though this economy is counteracted by the

fact that he allows "the inaudible and noiseless foot of Time" to steal on all his other activities without remark or remorse. He can drink any water he comes across without regard to the cautious considerations that keep thirst-stricken Europeans from all but the boiled and filtered product, and he can eat anything that does not affect his caste without the carking knowledge that it may contain the germs of cholera or the bacilli of some other fell disease. And when death does come, he can go in peace without the disturbing thought that his wife and numerous children will not be properly provided for either by his own family or by his family-in-law.

Considered domestically, it requires but little reflection to reveal the *raiyat's* really enviable position. He is not haunted by any lurking suspicion that there may be something in eugenics after all, and he is not hampered by the notions of providence that prevail in more advanced communities. He is, it is true, denied the doubtful delights of civilized courtship, but he is also exempted from the uncertainty that makes marriage a veritable lottery wherever any freedom of choice is allowed. The joint family

system enables him to apply Benedick's philosophy that "the world must be peopled" without any sense of personal responsibility, the Malthusian theory being also ready to assist him by means of periodical pestilence and occasional famine. His ideas as to the subordination of women being eminently sound, he has no females as "curst and shrewd as Socrates' Xantippe" to deal with, never experiences "the venom clamours of a jealous woman," and is free from those petty domestic disagreements that begin in quibbles and end in squabbles.

Considered economically, the *raiyat* is equally well off. As the cultivator of the soil, he is so considerately and, in general, consistently, assisted by Nature, that he has already transcended the Socialist or Syndicalist millenium of four hours' work a day and six months' holiday a year. It is true that his plough is the same as that which "in ancient times employed the kings and awful fathers of mankind," but the results he achieves with it are sufficient to cover all his wants, and he is not conscious of any desire for better things. He is often accused of a stupid reverence for antiquated methods which are, however, really the

fruits of inherited experience handed down by tradition—the only repository of such lore in the absence of books. As cousin Slender puts it in connection with the pretensions of the worthy Justice Shallow: "All his successors gone before him have done't; and a his ancestors that come after him may." Though the *raiyat's* minimum of subsistence is low, his luxury margin is small and dependent on a distribution of rainfall that is apt to be erratic. He cannot therefore be blamed for caution nor, still less, can he be blamed because the lack of capital prevents him from availing himself of the results of the interesting experiments that the Agricultural Department is constantly making with the best intentions. Even if the *raiyat* could afford them, labour-saving machines are not required in a land of minute holdings, where labour is cheap and yet well paid so far as the personal needs of the labourer, and the economic efficiency of his labour, are concerned. The fact remains that various reputable authorities have admitted that the *raiyat* is an agricultural expert, and have expressed admiration for his ingenuity in devising irrigation facilities even at the expense of communications.

Through no merit of his own, the value of the *raiyat's* agricultural produce has increased considerably within recent years, the famine rates of twenty-five years ago having become the prevailing rates of to-day. Everyone else, from the highest official down to the lowest clerk, complains of this rise in prices, but it has meant a corresponding rise in the *raiyat's* standard of comfort, which now includes American cigarettes (made in Monghyr), Manchester piece-goods (made in Bombay), and Sheffield cutlery (made in Germany).

It is sometimes alleged, even by writers who might be expected to know better, that the *raiyat* is the victim of economic forces over which no one attempts to exercise any control. The landlord and the money-lender are represented as the two jaws of a vice, which the courts of justice screw closer together if the *raiyat* tries to wriggle out of their grip. A certain amount of exploitation is of course inevitable in a free country, but, so far as the *raiyat's* relations with his landlord are concerned, the boot is (to change the metaphor) rapidly being transferred to the other foot. The *raiyat* of Bengal was in a fairly parlous plight for many years after the Permanent Settlement,

but his " Magna Charta " was promulgated more than fifty years ago, and his emancipation has progressed steadily ever since. The days have gone by when he had to " sweat for duty, not for meed," and a benevolent Government has specially created the Settlement Department for his further protection. That Department is supposed to frame a record-of-rights in accordance with things as it finds them, but it is said that it usually records things as it would like to find them. However that may be, the benefit that the *raiyat* has got out of the process is undeniable. All the abuses to which he was subjected have been sternly suppressed, and, in addition, many privileges to which he never made a claim have been conferred. He has been given a more or less free hand in despoiling the jungle that is of so much economic importance in a country dependent on rainfall for its very existence ; his rent cannot be enhanced except under the orders of a court bound by statutory conditions that are difficult to satisfy ; and, if he wishes to give his landlord as much trouble over the collection of his legal dues as is possible, he can deposit his rent in a Government Treasury by means of an admittedly transparent

fiction. In return for these and similar advantages, the *raiyat* contributes practically nothing towards the expenses of the State. Political economists are not agreed as to whether the land revenue paid to Government is rent or a tax, but it is really rather an unnecessary waste of time to argue academically about terms which have never been exclusively defined. The essential fact is that the *raiyat* gets an excellent return for the amount he pays for the use of his land, and taxation would not breed conscientious objectors and passive resisters, if it was always similarly remunerative. Agricultural profits are exempt from the income tax that hits fixed earnings from other sources so hard, and, though the tax on salt does perhaps reach the *raiyat*, its incidence is indirect and it has always been lightened in recent years when the finances of the country permitted. The *raiyat* also contributes to the excise revenue, but, while again he does not feel the impact of the tax, the system enables him, if he be so inclined, to get as drunk as Davy's sow on an outlay of two or three pence.

How ideally arcadian are the surroundings of the *raiyat* may be conveyed in the words

of a writer who did not overlook the other side of the picture: "The village and its old trees have to climb on to a knoll to keep their feet out of the glorious poppy and the luscious sugar-cane. Sumptuous cream-coloured bullocks move sleepily about with an air of luxurious sloth; and sleek Brahmins utter their lazy prayers while bathing languidly in the water and sunshine of the tank. Even the buffaloes have nothing to do but float the livelong day deeply immersed in the bulrushes. Everything is steeped in repose. The bees murmur their idylls among the flowers; the doves croon their amorous complaints from the shady leafage of pipal trees; out of the cool recesses of wells, the idle cooing of the pigeons ascends into the summer air; the rainbow-fed chameleon slumbers on the branch; the enamelled beetle on the leaf; the little fish in the sparkling depths below; the radiant kingfisher, tremulous as sunlight, in mid-air; and the peacock, with furled glories, on the temple tower of the silent gods." This luscious language makes the mouth water, but honesty compels the admission that it is not applicable to Bengal in most of its particulars. In that Presi-

dency, the rustic scenery is not "framed in the prodigality of Nature," and the prevailing monotony of the landscape would be obvious even to a Peter Bell—the green of the growing paddy plant, or the gold of the ripe paddy ear, or the brown of the cut paddy stubble, all bathed in strong sunshine, and variegated with illusively inviting tanks surrounded by sinuous palms. The "glorious poppy" has vanished for reasons which were not æsthetic, and there are certainly no "sumptuous cream-coloured bullocks." But the general impression of *dolce far niente* and drowsy peace—nought doing, saying little, thinking less—is characteristically correct, and must be a valuable asset unless all the poets are to be discredited as purveyors of false ideas on the subject.

No one can deny that the *raiyat* is ignorant, but there are advantages about ignorance that are proclaimed in proverbial philosophy and in poetry such as that of "dear Matt Prior," who somewhere says :

> "From ignorance our comfort flows,
> The only wretched are the wise."

The *raiyat's* ceremonial respect for Saras-vati, the goddess of wisdom, is, however,

being slowly converted into a practical interest by the determined dissemination of primary education, though meanwhile he remains above all suspicion of the sin of ambition, and blissfully beyond the reach of news as the term is understood in more enlightened communities. It is a Shakespearean commonplace that "the web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together," and the *raiyat* does not of course differ from the rest of humanity in this respect. Famine is always lurking on his horizon, but modern administration has evolved a system of relief that works almost as a matter of routine, and means little more than temporary inconvenience to him. The familiarity of village life breeds faction feuds, which are responsible for most of the litigation that eats into the *raiyat's* substance and drives him to the money-lender. It is only a small percentage of the cultivating classes that goes to law over legitimate causes of action unconnected with local party politics, but it seems that, once he has tried it, the *raiyat* revels in the legal rat-trap and, as did Shakespeare, finds litigation an expensive habit that grows on a man until he becomes

a regular Tom Touchy—not lost, but gone to law. The extravagant expenditure on marriages and funerals, into which the *raiyat* is forced by his social customs, is another cloud on his fair prospect, but, while the remedy for this evil is largely in his own hands, the expenditure is a matter of caste prestige as important as in more civilized climes, where Mr. Smith has to disregard Micawber's famous financial prescription in order, as the phrase goes, to keep up appearances. This keeping of his end up towards both his enemies-at-law and his relations-in-law compels the *raiyat* to resort to the *mahájan*, whose rates of interest and terms of business are determined by the law of supply and demand, and by the precarious nature of the security offered. With the spread of co-operation, even this evil will, however, gradually disappear, though the *raiyat* may then acquire the fear (hitherto confined to individuals living under more complex conditions) that his village bank may suddenly fail and engulf the savings that now repose, securely useless under the floor of his hut. His sleep may therefore be less sweet possibly, while it is practically certain that, after he is educated

and attains the dignity of a banking account, his life will become less happy subjectively as it ceases to approximate closely to that of Goldsmith's villager :

> "His best companions, innocence and health,
> And his best riches, ignorance of wealth."

THE USEFUL MISSIONARY.

THE MISSIONARY.

> And then the Missionary,
> In habit sad enclosing unrich ribs,
> Speaking his words to unresponsive ears,
> But earning peace for his immortal soul
> After his part is played.

THE Missionary is the handy man of India. He can cultivate as well as convert, build as well as bless, play as well as preach, explore as well as educate, investigate as well as interpret, and, if occasion arises, chastise as well as condone. Versatility is not an uncommon accomplishment in the comparatively isolated environment of India, but it is a particularly conspicuous characteristic of the Missionary, whose activities are usually as varied as the dogmas of his divers denominations. Considered as a class, the nature of his occupation and the manner of his life may easily inspire the kind of hero worship that is in constant danger of disregarding the law of the head; considered as an individual, the idiosyncrasies of his mentality and the peculiarities of his conduct sometimes excite the sort of criticism that is apt to overlook the law of the

heart. While no one can deny that the genus Missionary is on the whole a beneficent institution, everyone can recollect several distinct species of Missionary having all the external attributes of the genus, combined with special differentiating characteristics that arouse varying emotions. Some of these species are admirable acquisitions to society ; others could be consigned without a regret to the oblivion of a cannibal's inside.

Among the former, the Sporting Missionary is perhaps pre-eminent. Proficiency in outdoor games is a valuable virtue wherever English is spoken and, in India specially, it is an " open sesame " to all hearts. It is worth more than mere brains, and at least as much as influence, and, when it is clothed in a clerical garb, its unexpectedness and apparent inconsistency seem to enhance its merit. At all events, the missionary who can train a team of aboriginals to beat all comers at a British game necessarily commands respect, and certainly secures toleration, even from the most heretical and uncanonical victim of *coup de soleil*. This type of padre does not, like many of his fellows, renounce the healthy optimism

of Gratiano ; though he may not, it is true, let his liver heat with wine, he certainly does not allow his heart to cool with mortifying groans, and generally reminds one of that schoolfellow of Doctor Johnson who failed to become a philosopher because "cheerfulness was always breaking in." If the Sporting Padre is, in short, "an abridgement of all that is pleasant in man," the Hypocritical Padre is his absolute antithesis. He is not of course a pious fraud, but he is always unctuously washing his hands with impalpable soap in imperceptible water, and his appearance and his habits are against him. He generally belongs to the order of "sleek-headed men," and his dress is almost invariably of an epicene description. His social mission is apparently that of "the flower that smiles on everyone," but his predilection for pejorative prefixes is disturbing, while his affectation of Heeplike humility is distasteful. His near relation, the Narrow-minded Padre, is similarly never a sportsman. There is a pharisaical flavour about him, which is readily recognised in his sweeping generalization of all non-Christians as "heathen," whether they be Brahmin ascetics of undoubted sanctity or Santal

animists with no possible pretensions to piety of any sort. Though a pellicle of worldliness may conceal the Christianity of most Europeans in India, its hypodermic existence can usually be credibly established by charitable observation, but the Narrow-minded Missionary never probes beneath the surface, and condemns all who do not exhibit outward and visible signs of their inward and spiritual grace. He is accordingly horrified at the idea of tennis on Sundays under any circumstances, while his mere presence is sufficient to circumscribe conversation within commonplace limits and curtail the circulation of amusing anecdotes. Though not encouraged by considerable congregations, he can bang the ecclesiastical drum with full fifty parson power, and produce the sonorous and self-satisfying sounds of intolerance and denunciation. The pity of it is that he is generally an estimable individual personally, though, owing to the mistaken idea that abstinence is necessarily more meritorious than moderation, he often illustrates the close relationship between the sublime and the ridiculous.

The Medical Missionary looks at theology from a physiological point of view and prob-

ably does more real good *via* the body than most of his brother-missionaries do through the soul. The value of his work is even recognised by a grateful Government, which occasionally thrusts greatness upon him in the shape of a Kaiser-i-Hind medal of the second class. The Medical Missionary knows too much about our Aryan brother to entertain any silly notions about his essential equality, but there is another type of missionary that seems to go out of his way to encourage them. His melancholy, like that of Jaques, is all his own. It is obviously not proud, nor ambitious, nor politic, nor even nice ; it is simply unnatural, and its colour is black. He shakes hands with parishioners of every degree as a matter of course, and allows various liberties that only arouse the contempt of those who indulge in them. The wearing of a *dhoti* is presumably intended to indicate a proper spirit of humility, but the manipulation of edibles with the fingers can only be attributed to the action of atavism in an otherwise civilized individual. Apart from Kipling's hackneyed lines, there is the evidence of Lafcadio Hearn (who married a Japanese lady of high Samurai rank and

taught for fourteen years in Japan) to the effect that the barrier between East and West is almost insuperable at many points, and, though exceptions may abound, it is probable that, so far as India is concerned, personal habits will be one of the last of these points to be surmounted. It is quite possible, that, like Othello, this species of missionary "loves not wisely, but too well," and there is certainly Shakespeare's authority for the proposition that "love can transpose, to form and dignity, things base and vile holding no quantity." He does, however, seem responsible for the fact that Christian servants are by common consent the most unsatisfactory of all Indian domestics. The reasons are many; in the first place, their ideas of equality are far too developed; in the next, their conversion to the doctrine of community of goods is much too literal; and, in the last, they have such a respect for the truth that they refuse to employ it profanely in ordinary intercourse.

The Interfering Missionary is not anything like so common as he used to be in the old days, when his interference generally took the form of championing his converts in the

criminal courts. He had a prehensile mind that could grasp anything except a reflection on the rectitude of any member of his flock, and he seemed unable to see anything improper in his attempts to influence the course of justice. There is a good story in this connection regarding a pragmatic padre who petitioned Government in the interests of six of his Christians who had been convicted of assault. At the trial, each accused had pleaded an *alibi* supported by many Christian witnesses, who failed, however, to convince the magistrate. When the missionary's indictment of the magistrate was examined it was found to proceed on the assumption, for which the missionary vouched after personal enquiry, that his Christians were really the aggrieved persons since the other party had been the aggressors. This artless admission that some quarrel had taken place was duly pointed out, and doubtless assisted Government to the sage conclusion that the magistrate's decision was probably correct. The missionary's language when he heard, for the first time, what defence had been set up by the accused in court is not on record, nor is it known whether his faith ever recovered from the

shock. Nowadays, it is more generally recognised that courts of law have ethical standards which exclude considerations of creed, and the Interfering Missionary is usually only a crank. His mind becomes possessed of some idea and common sense is shut out. Though the words of his mouth are smoother than butter, war is in his heart, and an unusual interest in the precincts of the *Kacheri* is an infallible symptom of his complaint. When the administrative authorities have become persuaded that he only "darkens counsel with words without knowledge," he proceeds to indite long screeds to the newspapers, based on obsolete statistics, and dealing with matters on which he has little or no first-hand information. As he is presumably an honest and sincere individual, the only possible assumption is that he must reach some of his startling conclusions by a mysterious process of unconscious cerebration; some people will not, however, admit the premiss, but they are usually interested, and charity would perhaps be too much to expect from them.

Though many experienced officials are of opinion that the large majority of low class natives only become Christians to serve

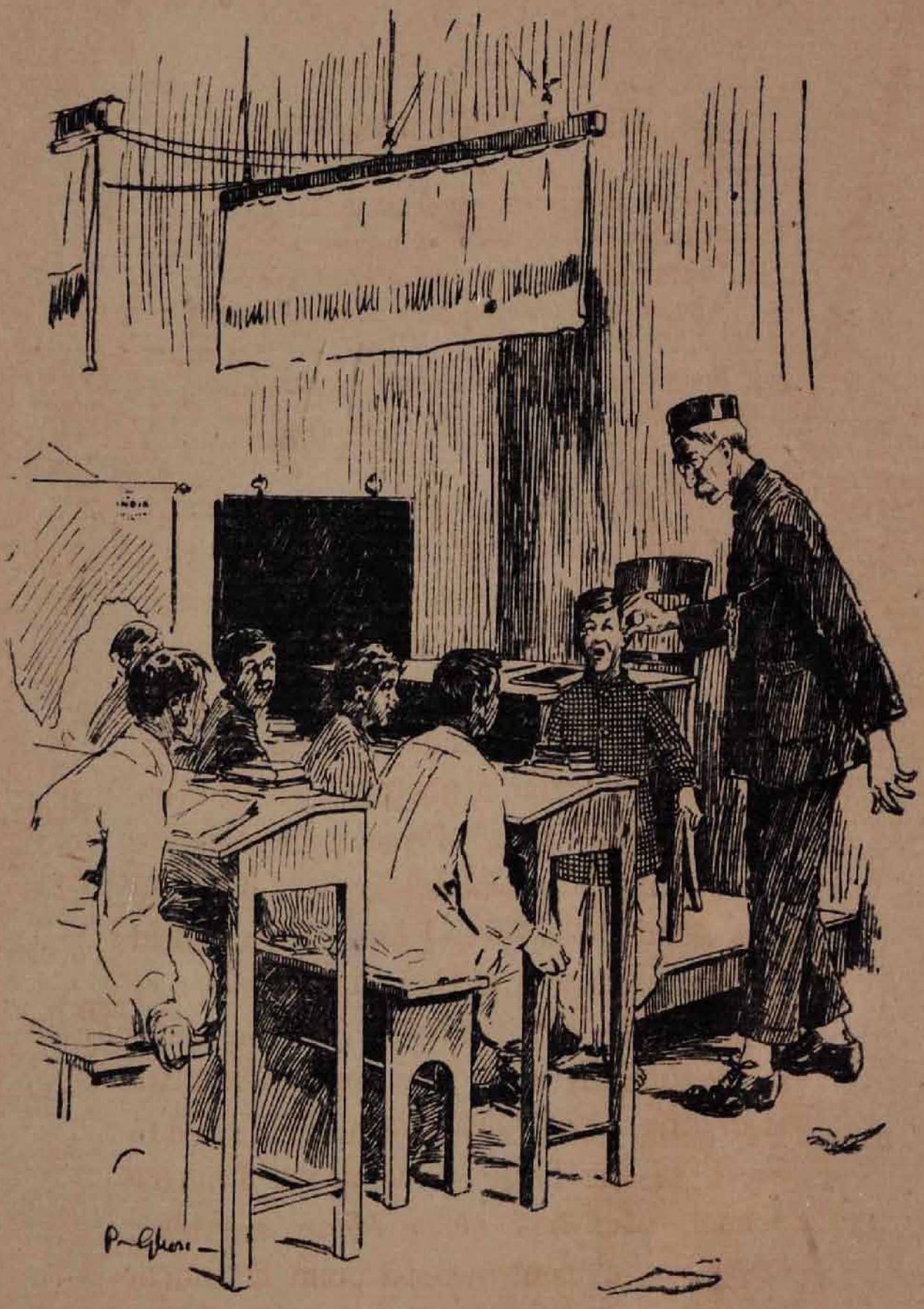
their own ends, and that, except in the comparatively few genuine conversions, the effect is socially and morally degrading, they all acknowledge the practical value of the Useful Missionary. He has no illusions regarding the political position and, by acting as the channel of communication between the authorities and the people, and as the interpreter to the latter of the generally good intentions of the former, constitutes a salutary counterpoise to the refracting medium of the vernacular press. He makes himself the master of languages and dialects that would otherwise remain unknown, and then enables others to master them by reducing their difficulties into the shape of a scientific grammar. He studies ethnological questions with the keenness and knowledge of the expert, and collects anthropometrical data with the exactitude and skill of the specialist. He knows as much about mythology as any high-priest, and is as well versed in folk-lore as any village story-teller. He may even be a mechanical expert prepared to instal electric lights and fans throughout a suffering station, or study the internal economy of motor cars for the benefit of those who cannot afford compe-

tent chauffeurs. He can be as oracular as an elected member of the Bengal Legislative Council, but is usually far more reliable. He seems to do everything thoroughly, and, even at tea-parties and other hen conventions, can cluck harmoniously with the oldest and knowingest or caper hilariously with the youngest and silliest. The Useless Missionary, on the other hand, is a melancholy object that may occasionally be seen wandering aimlessly around the Club with an air of being "among them, but not of them." Either "his cogitative faculties are immersed in cogibundity of cogitation," or else, like Sir Oracle, he maintains "a wilful stillness" in the biblical belief that "even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise." However that may be, he seems to have nothing to say to anybody, and nobody seems to have anything to say to him. If anyone does venture a remark, he lets down his far-away features a peg or two, and the bold spirit hastily seeks something biblable. This species of padre is an expert in depression; he cultivates it subjectively and induces it objectively. He is, in short, a *lusus naturæ* of the vertebrate type perhaps, but "still in the gristle

and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood."

The Literary Missionary is the only species that is regarded with mixed feelings. He has a good verbal memory and arouses admiring attention by apt quotations "delivered upon the mellowing of occasion." But he also wears his hair and his clothes in a consciously original manner; is often rude under the impression that he is being witty; and affects absent-mindedness as a pleasing eccentricity of genius. Unlike Benedick, he is persuaded that he was "born under a rhyming planet," and accordingly produces poetry which, if really inspired in occasional instances, is usually easier to write than understand. Though his prospects of "walking under the acacias of Lausanne" may thus be remote, the value of his culture is undeniable among men whose intellectual interests are apt to become bounded by the details of their daily duties. Most of the conversation in India is either scandal or shop, with an occasional concession to culture in the shape of a superficial exchange of emotions engendered by some erotic novel, but the Literary Padre has, as Hazlitt said of Godwin, "a

cellarage in his understanding," where a distinctive flavour is imparted to his social intercourse. His flair for literature finds expression in a well-chosen library which is a real boon to the official, who is moved about from pillar to post at the behest of some unseen power, and who finds the disproportion between travelling allowances and transfer expenses too pronounced to encourage the collection of unnecessary *impedimenta*. Along with the sporting parson, the medical missionary, and the useful padre, the literary species may therefore be accorded a nook in the fane of fair report with the ecumenical epitaph : "This was a man."



THE SCHOOLMASTER IS REALLY SEVERE.

THE SCHOOLMASTER.

"How many masters, whose brains are all as dull
As lumps of lead, wear yet behind their names
The marks of Minerva or laurel'd Clio;
Who, inward search'd, have minds as blank
as paper,
And do assume but learning's excrescence
To render them a living.

THE system of education in India is almost, if not quite, as complex and chaotic as that which obtains in England. Schools are everywhere the most important factor in the educational process, and, in Bengal, there are High Schools, Middle English Schools, Middle Vernacular Schools, Upper Primary Schools, and Lower Primary Schools, to say nothing of *páthshálás*, *tols*, Training Schools, and the several kinds of technical schools. Hence it is that the schoolmaster is as ubiquitous as the lawyer, varying somewhat similarly from the lordly graduate of the High School, who has nothing more to learn, to the lowly *guru* of the Primary School, who has never learnt anything. On the great controversial point in Indian education, he is usually a Macaulayite,

but he may also be one of those disciples of Max Müller who look forward to a sort of Indian Renaissance based on indigenous ancient literature. In other respects, he pursues, what Charles Lamb called, "the most laborious of all occupations" under conditions that are apparently much the same as those that existed in England in the seventeenth century.

The authority for this rather novel proposition may be found in certain remarks, regarding the state of schoolmastering in his time, made by that quaint divine, Thomas Fuller, in his *Holy and Profane States*: "There is scarce any profession in the Commonwealth more necessary, which is so slightly performed. The reasons whereof I conceive to be these. First, young scholars make this calling their refuge; yea, perchance, before they have taken any degree in the university, commence schoolmasters in the country, as if nothing else were required to set up this profession but only a rod and a ferula. Secondly, others who are able, use it only as a passage to better preferment, to patch the rents in their present fortune, till they can provide a new one, and betake themselves to some more

gainful calling. Thirdly, they are disheartened from doing their best with the miserable reward which in some places they receive, being masters to their children and slaves to their parents. Fourthly, being grown rich, they grow negligent, and scorn to touch the school but by proxy of the usher." On all except the last point, the stage of acquiring riches from educational institutions having not yet been reached, this passage might well have been written as a description of Indian schoolmasters of to-day. A University degree, whether Indian or otherwise, is not necessarily a sign of learning, any more than prudery is a proof of purity; still less does it connote the possession of qualities suitable for educational work. It attaches a more or less definite intellectual label to a man, however, and is the only practical criterion by which an *a priori* selection of schoolmasters can be made. But the large majority of Indian schoolmasters have no university degree of any sort, and many of them have no educational qualifications whatever. To remedy this, they have evolved a characteristic conceit by means of which a "plucked B.A." is regarded as only

slightly inferior to the graduate who has successfully swallowed "the shallow draughts of wisdom that intoxicate the brain," and become, what Mrs. Malaprop called, "a progeny of learning." Nor is this all. The schoolmaster of Fuller's time did at least consider a rod and a ferula as necessary parts of his professional equipment, but the Indian schoolmaster does not recognise these immemorial insignia of his office, and thinks that, as medicine may be effective without being bitter, so may discipline be enforced without corporal punishment. This is ingenious as suggesting an exposure of traditional error, but, if it is true, what a lot poor Solomon will have to answer for! Without, however, approving the methods of old Orbilius, whose enthusiasm for flogging is feelingly referred to in Horace's Epistles, or of the Rev. James Boyer, with his two wigs of differing omen, his heavy hand, and his *rabidus furor* so seldom assuaged, one feels sure that the cane and other similar attributes to awe and majesty are still necessary in sublunary schools where the children are not yet cherubs. There is indeed a precious jewel in the head of the toad which the Indian schoolmaster cannot see.

As regards the use of their profession as a passage to better preferment, Indian schoolmasters even turn their training to profit by transferring their talents to other spheres of utility before, to use an Irishism, they have actually adorned the scholastic one. They join the Training Schools with the implied intention of becoming schoolmasters, and, after enjoying a small stipend while their capabilities are being cultivated without charge, gratefully conclude that education is not their particular province, and dedicate themselves to some other calling for which they have only become fitted by their training. Those who do become schoolmasters consider apparently that their prospects are not sufficiently attractive, and accordingly hasten to qualify themselves for other careers during every minute of the spare time afforded by their scholastic duties. After a time, these gentlemen apply for leave in order to complete their cramming, and cannot understand why they should not be allowed to retain a lien on their appointments in the event of their efforts not being crowned with success. Even after the union of their endowments with education has been finally sealed, they will constantly try to break

the *vinculum matrimonii* that binds them to any particular partner. Incompatibility of climate is usually alleged as the ground for separation, the real reason in most cases being that some more affluent consort has been discovered. The practical difficulty of securing, and still more of keeping, good schoolmasters is in fact great. If their homes are in the vicinity, they soon become involved in the intrigues of party faction to the detriment of their duties; if they are not local men, they are never contented with their lot and are always answering advertisements that appear to offer them a better opening. So far as the question of pay is concerned, the masters in the secondary schools are comparatively well off, but, in the primary schools, where the masses are educated through the medium of the vernacular, and of which there are about one hundred to every single secondary school, the teachers are miserably paid, and generally have to eke out existence on the charity of the parents of those whom they are supposed to be masters over.

The Indian schoolmaster has some peculiar ideas on the subject of education. He believes, for example, that education is

intended for the benefit of the upper classes only. This idea may be traced to the caste system, and it finds expression in the determined refusal to admit low-caste boys to free or half-free studentships, however deserving they may be intellectually, and however straitened their parents may be financially. He believes also that numbers are an infallible indication of progress and that examination results are the only criteria of success. He is supremely happy as long as the roll-number of his school is growing, and considers that it is quite unnecessary to make simultaneous provision for accommodation and appliances for the increasing numbers. The same idea underlies the demand made in other quarters that Government grants should be spent on increasing the number of schools rather than on improving the existing inefficient institutions. As regards examinations, they have their uses, but they certainly become abuses when they are regarded as the end, rather than one of the means, of education. It must be added, however, that this idea, which leads directly to vicious and barefaced cramming, is not discouraged by the fact that examination results are one of

the principal considerations on which grants-in-aid are awarded. Another idea, which is perhaps the most deplorable of all in the long run, is that all time spent in games is time wasted. The schoolmaster seldom or never plays games himself. If he has ever been taught to hold a cricket bat or kick a football, he speedily contrives to forget all about it under the stress of more material ways of employing his leisure hours. As a result, he takes no interest in games, confines his attentions entirely to intellectual development, and cannot be persuaded that physical and moral development are co-ordinate parts of the educational process. He is supported in this attitude by the average Indian parent, who wants concrete and tangible results for his money, and who consequently refuses to recognise that self-reliance, self-control, a sense of discipline, and the spirit of co-operation are all valuable mental and moral qualities which are developed by games, quite apart from that mere development of the body which prevents premature decay and makes intellectual distinction worth having. The growth of these qualities cannot be definitely marked, however, and the Indian

parent therefore suspects their existence, even though he may admit that the undoubted growth of the body is similarly impalpable. Left to his own devices, the schoolboy spends most of his spare time at his books, with the result that diversion has often to be used as a remedy where it should have been used as a prophylactic, and leisure found for the luxury of illness where it could not be found for the necessity of games.

In the *páthshálás*, numberless little boys attain great proficiency in the use of the multiplication tables and in the art of epistolary address. This knowledge is imparted, and imbibed, with the maximum amount of that noise which is everywhere a sign of hollowness rather than solidity. The value which parents attach to the instruction given in these institutions is pleasingly portrayed in the proverbial couplet :—

> *" Háthe káli, mukhe káli,*
> *Báchá ámár likhe eli,"*

which may be freely translated :—

> If hands and face show lots of ink,
> My boy is diligent I think.

There are, however, other institutions in which education is seriously attempted. Herbert Spencer said that education is "a preparation for living," but the Bengali student regards it as a preparation for a living. All other considerations are subordinated to this end, and, as a result, there is no "creeping like snail unwillingly to school" in Bengal, nor does the schoolboy have to be forced up the slopes of Parnassus by the scruff of his neck. A desire for knowledge without the faculty of assimilation is, however, as fatal as a desire for food without the capacity of digestion, and the Indian schoolboy generally shows symptoms of this mental indigestion by disgorging what he has eaten in the same condition as it was when swallowed. A knowledge of English is perhaps the thing most sought after in Indian education. It is essential for service under Government, and service under Government is the comparatively secure haven that every Indian student hopes to reach. What is attained, however, is more like what Mistress Quickly called, "an old abusing of the King's English." Bagehot is reported to have said that an Eton boy's knowledge of Greek amounted to a

suspicion that there was such a language, and Mr. Riley, the auctioneer in *The Mill on the Floss*, had " a sense of understanding Latin generally, though his comprehension of any particular Latin was not ready." An Indian schoolboy's knowledge of English is somewhat similar. He is all right as long as the context and circumstances are familiar to him, but he breaks down hopelessly among strange surroundings. He might in fact say, in the manner of Caliban : " You taught me the English language ; and my profit on't is, I know how to answer examination questions if they suit me."

The Indian schoolmaster has the Education Department to contend with in addition. That Department thinks that education was made for it, and not that it was made for education. Hence come many evil thorns in the schoolmaster's flesh. Everything must be done in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Department, and, if there is any deviation, even though it be dictated by common sense or obvious utility, a reminder that the school grant is contingent on continued approval speedily follows. The lower grades of the inspecting staff are narrow-minded and

hide-bound, and they consider it dignified to keep properly aloof from, and preserve a strong prejudice against, the executive authorities. Matthew Arnold became an inspector of schools in order that he might marry, and it would certainly be most interesting to know why some of these gentlemen felt called upon to assist the spread of education. The more responsible officials do not, it is true, countenance the attitude assumed by the smaller fry, but even they are not sufficiently inclined to say to schoolmasters: "God help those who do not help themselves." It is not surprising therefore that the average Indian schoolmaster prefers precept to practice, and is in a perpetual state of preparation that rarely realizes any performance. He is in short a schoolmaster in the ore who may perchance be refined by the action of the ages.

PART OF THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE'S DAY'S WORK.

THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE.

Pygmalion is his ideal part,
With ultimate union crowning his art,
But the Indian Galatea seems to incline
Towards playing the monster of Frankenstein.

To the admiring eyes of those who know him, the District Magistrate is truly pictured in the words applied by the lean and hungry-looking Cassius to an almost equally eminent individual :

" Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus ; and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves."

He is not always born great, but he invariably achieves greatness, and it is a Shakespearean commonplace, confirmed by the experience of every day, that " what great ones do, the less will prattle of." What the District Magistrate has done is recorded both in history and song, and a small part of what he now does is the burden of this immortal lay. Many interesting writers, some of whom did not belong to the Indian Civil Service, have demonstrated

to the world's satisfaction that the District Magistrate has to be a veritable *sabjanta-wálá*, and the wonder still continues to grow that "one small head can carry all he knows." Law, economics, engineering, agriculture, archæology, ethnology, sanitary science, estate management, cadastral survey, excise, police and municipal administration, all combined with more than a *soupçon* of psychology and philosophy, are only a few of the miscellaneous matters which he is expected to be thoroughly conversant with, and which would infallibly derange the balance of any lesser brain. As regards work, the matter has been placed beyond controversy, if, indeed, it could ever have been a matter for controversy, by irrefutable authority. The ninth day of his all-too-short sojourn in India was spent by "Ali Baba" with the District Magistrate in his "undividable and incorporate" capacity of Collector, and one of the conclusions he arrived at, with characteristic acumen, was that "his multitudinous duties succeed one another so fast that one is never ended before the next begins." Further evidence would be superfluous because everyone knows that, except in the realms of fanciful fiction, a

man who can do two things at the same time, even to his own satisfaction, must necessarily be gifted with uncommon parts. But this is not all. Besides the omniscience of the heaven-born and the physical energy of the galley-slave, the District Magistrate must possess the tact of a diplomatist combined with the firmness of a London policeman, the urbanity of an aide-de-camp combined with the pugnacity of a pugilist, the opportunism of a politician combined with the finality of an editor, the ambiguity of an ancient oracle combined with the positiveness of a modern critic, the strategy of a soldier combined with the driving-power of a sailing-ship mate, and, last, but far from least, the tenacity of a bulldog tinctured with the obstinacy of a well-known quadruped.

One or more of these qualities is always in evidence, and many of them are called into play during the visits that Indian gentlemen consider it advisable to pay the District Magistrate. Though he is *ex necessitate rei* busy at the time, and may even allow an exclamation of annoyance to escape him when he catches sight of the strip of paper that usually serves as a visiting-

card, the District Magistrate would be much more offended if such visits were omitted. This is not, as some people may think, because he objects to being overlooked, but because, like the bee that makes her honey from sweets extracted from many kinds of flowers, the District Magistrate builds up his knowledge of his district on information gathered from many various sources. While giving few his voice, he gives every man his ear and remembers that the cackling of geese saved the Roman Capitol. Much of what he hears is false, and much of what he learns is never actually spoken, but hints are often dropped in the comparative intimacy of personal intercourse that could not safely be incorporated in a written petition, though they are fully corroborated by subsequent observation or enquiry. In conducting these interviews, the District Magistrate has constantly to bear in mind the molehills of etiquette that may so easily be exaggerated into mountains of offence, more particularly in these advanced days when the columns of the vernacular press are invitingly thrown open to every complaint of fancied discourtesy. It is the proper thing to enquire

earnestly after a visitor's health, but a similar enquiry regarding the ladies of his household would be in bad taste ordinarily. The offer of a chair induces self-satisfaction in his expansive breast, but the wheels of communication cannot be further greased with the genial, and otherwise instinctive, offer of a drink. Conversation is apt to get clogged in such an atmosphere, especially as the visitor's real object is never disclosed until the interview has been terminated by his host, who then has to resign himself to another five or ten minutes during which the particular request that has prompted the call is proffered in the usual circumlocutory manner. In dealing with such requests, the District Magistrate has to cultivate the habit of definiteness ; he gets plenty of practice fortunately, though the polite fictions of his own social circle are apt to be a disturbing element. If immediate decision is not possible, he must be " ever precise in promise-keeping," and may not, on any account, palter like " the juggling fiends, that keep the word of promise to our ear, but break it to our hope."

If it was necessary, it would be easy to multiply examples of the District Magis-

trate's activities in a panegyric vein, but it will be sufficient for the present to vindicate him on one point regarding which he is tragically and thoughtlessly misunderstood. It is not an uncommon complaint that, when he opens his lips, no dog must bark, and that, as his top-dogginess cannot be contested, the wholesome mental exercise afforded by controversial conversation is thus unnaturally restricted. It is also alleged that his ability in argument is often exceeded by his readiness to argue, and instances are cited in support of the proposition that he would not only argue with Selous about *shikár*, and with Kitchener about tactics, but that he would also be prepared to question the Archangel Gabriel's description of Heaven on *à priori* grounds. It is further asserted that he is occasionally unfortunate enough to arouse the suspicion that his reasons are weak by seeking to establish his contentions on the mere strength of his authority, and there can be no doubt that it is considered unsafe to venture beyond the "retort courteous" or, at most, the "quip modest" in discussion with him. One foolhardy spirit did on one occasion, it is said, get as far as the "counter-

check quarrelsome" and the "lie circumstantial," but he disappeared shortly afterwards and his fearful example has been sufficient. It is, however, only unimaginative persons who ascribe this apparent intolerance of opposition to intellectual arrogance. In the first place, individuals of the type in question are found in every service, and the higher one ascends into the rarified atmosphere of official big bugdom, the more are they encountered. In the case of the District Magistrate, however, it is really nothing more than another instance of the use that habit breeds in a man. When he arrives in India as a callow 'Stant,' the first thing that is impressed on him, if such a precaution should be necessary, is the fact that a Civilian must know, or pretend to know, everything, and he is earnestly exhorted to eschew, as a fatal failing, that confession of ignorance which is, according to Montaigne, one of the finest and surest testimonies of judgment. During his early years of abecedarianism, he constantly has to give doctoral decisions on doubtful points in a confident manner that must carry conviction, and confer the authority of established fact for all future

time. At a later period, he is continually being called upon to write roods of reports on subjects about which he knows nothing before he writes his report, and about which he forgets everything as soon as his report has been written. He becomes a mere omniscribent machine that "reports all day and corresponds all night" *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*. The natural habits and commercial potentialities of the Ganges porpoise, or of the United Provinces porcupine, is a simple sample of the sort of problem that he is required to solve with lucidity and rapidity, so far as these qualities are consistent with a maximum consumption of stationery. A dogmatic mentality, and an infinite capacity for deductive reasoning based on anything except experience, are inevitable in the circumstances, and it is unfair to blame the individual for faults for which the administrative system is responsible. If, therefore, the District Magistrate sometimes seems "wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason," it is only right to remember that it is his official graces serving him but as enemies, and misleading him either into quoting authority against expe-

rience, or into instancing experience against authority, or, where both authority and experience are against him, into being merely egodixical. On the other hand, it cannot be gainsaid that, though stiff in opinion, he is not always, nor even generally, on the wrong side, and is never on the side of wrong ; also that, while he sometimes says a foolish thing, unlike the Merry Monarch, he usually does a wise one. He knows that " censure is the tax a man pays to the public for being eminent," and is accordingly becomingly indifferent to the feelings of those who may cherish a belief in the lessons of their personal experience, and be reluctant to accept his contrary contentions " as a cat laps milk." For practical purposes, though such people may be inclined to expostulate in the manner of Shylock : " If you challenge us, shall we not argue," it will be found safer to sacrifice the vanity of self-opinion to the necessity of self-preservation. Argument would be a waste of time, and victory, even if the wildly improbable was achieved, would certainly be of the Cadmean type.

The glamour of the District Magistrate's unquestioned supremacy is apt to enshade

the burden of responsibility that lies heavily on his shoulders. He cannot relax his vigilance for a moment, and has *chaprássis* and other menials flying about with papers, even while he is seeking some brief relaxation in a game of tennis at a friend's house. He must not only dispose of, or see that somebody subordinate to him disposes of, the work that litigants and other such troublesome people create, but he must also resist all temptation towards personal inaction on the *quieta non movere* principle that only *pakka* Commissioners can indulge in. All things considered, the fate that awaits the District Magistrate is, therefore, a touching one. If he should survive the vicissitudes of career and climate, he must, by mere efflux of time, either retire with a comparatively exiguous pension on to the oblivion of the shelf, where he finishes his existence in sad rumination on his quondam greatness, or be translated to the Olympian heights of the Secretariat from which he then "scorns the base degrees by which he did ascend."

THE CHAUKIDAR PATROLS HIS BEAT.

THE RURAL POLICE.

The Chaukidar as village guard
His life is loth to jeopard ;
Though robbers bang at houses barr'd,
His peaceful sleep is never marr'd.

THE organization, direction, and utilization of the rural police have not advanced beyond the stage of possibilities in Bengal. In the early days of British rule, police work was controlled by the executive staff with the assistance of the local landlords, the theory being that the Bengali landlord would gratefully discharge his obligations under the Permanent Settlement and be as zealous in the cause of law and order as an English squire. The District Magistrate was the head of the regular police, while the landlords were responsible for the village police. The inexpediency of a system under which the thief-catcher was also the thief-trier, coupled with the corrupt co-operation of the *darogá* and the landlord, led first to the reorganization of the regular force under separate European superintendence, and then to the exclusion of the village watch from the service of the landlord. These

new watchmen were called *chaukidárs*, and legislative provision was made for their appointment, dismissal, and maintenance, without the intervention either of the landlord or of the regular police. The former has been more or less effectively eliminated as an active influence, but it is still impossible to make much headway without the assistance of the latter. The Sub-Inspector is a most convenient triton among the *chaukidári* minnows, and he therefore continues to play a considerable, and on the whole a useful, part in their supervision.

The number of *chaukidári* Unions in a Police Station varies with its size and the density of the population, but each Union is supposed to represent the golden mean between so small a unit as to be capable of control by a clique, and so large a one as to preclude close relations between the villagers and the *Panchayat*. The latter is a body consisting of five members who are supposed to be carefully selected from the *bhadralog* class and to be primarily responsible for the maintenance of the village police. Appointment to the *Panchayat* is hypothetically an honour, but it has not yet assumed that dignity in practice, and the

so-called selection of candidates usually resolves itself into preferment by the local Sub-Inspector of Police. The principal duty of the *Panchayat* is the assessment and collection of the *chaukidári* tax, from the proceeds of which the village *chaukidárs* are paid and equipped. As laid down by the law, this system of local taxation satisfies all the accepted canons of equality, certainty, economy, and productivity, but, as administered by the *Panchayat*, it fails to fulfil any one of them. The members are supposed to meet two months before the beginning of each Bengali year and frame an estimate of their requirements for the ensuing year, but, with the innate improvidence of the East, this is usually considered a superfluous precaution, with the result that none of the members, except perhaps the synecdochically-styled Collecting *Panchayat*, has any idea how the *Panchayat* stands financially. The next step in the process is the assessment of every person living in the Union according to circumstances and property requiring protection. The *Panchayat* ought to do this as a body and *coram publico*, but it is generally done privately and in accordance with the personal

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prejudices of the members. As the wealthier classes of the community are really the only people benefited by the maintenance of the rural police, the assessment should fall primarily and principally on them, the poorer people being exempted as far as possible. What happens, however, is that the cultivator and the labourer, with a bare minimum of subsistence and little or no standard of comfort beyond necessity, bear the brunt of the assessment, while only the difference required to establish financial equilibrium is realized from the well-to-do people. This inequitable incidence is the most striking feature of *chaukidári* taxation and, aggravated as it is by the operation of faction feeling on the *Panchayat's* opinion as to an individual's capacity to pay, constitutes a rather curious echo to the local self-government cry.

Having prepared an assessment list on the preceding principles, the *Panchayat* is supposed to publish it and to hear, determine, and record all objections preferred within a month. This is a melancholy business for the assessees. Even if the assessment list is published, the objections are dealt with perfunctorily if they are urged on their

merits alone, and it more often happens that the demand for its payment is the first intimation that an illiterate assessee receives of an enhanced tax. The collecting *Panchayat* is permitted to retain ten per cent of the amount actually collected, partly as remuneration and partly as costs of collection; but, as the budget makes provision for an item of fifteen per cent on the whole amount required for the pay and equipment of the *chaukidárs*, the additional five per cent being intended to cover losses on default by death or departure, he invariably contrives to appropriate fifteen per cent of the demand instead of only ten per cent of the collections. In addition, he seldom or never deposits the penalties realized from defaulters by summary distress, and habitually pockets the pay of *chaukidárs* for the unavoidable interval between their vacation of office for any reason, such as death or dismissal, and the appointment of new incumbents by the leisurely and lucrative system of nomination. It is not surprising therefore that the post of Collecting Member tends to become a regular business, and that the other members merely take a selfish interest in the proceedings.

Both collectively and individually, the *Panchayat* renders little or no reliable assistance in general administrative matters, though it seems self-evident that, if properly selected and sympathetically supervised, the local knowledge and information of the members would often be of the greatest value. The possibilities of the system in this direction are commencing to be recognised and developed, and the demand for its abrogation in favour of control by Government comes most inconsistently from certain members of the Legislative Council who profess to be ardent advocates of *swáráj*, local self-government, and other such shibboleths.

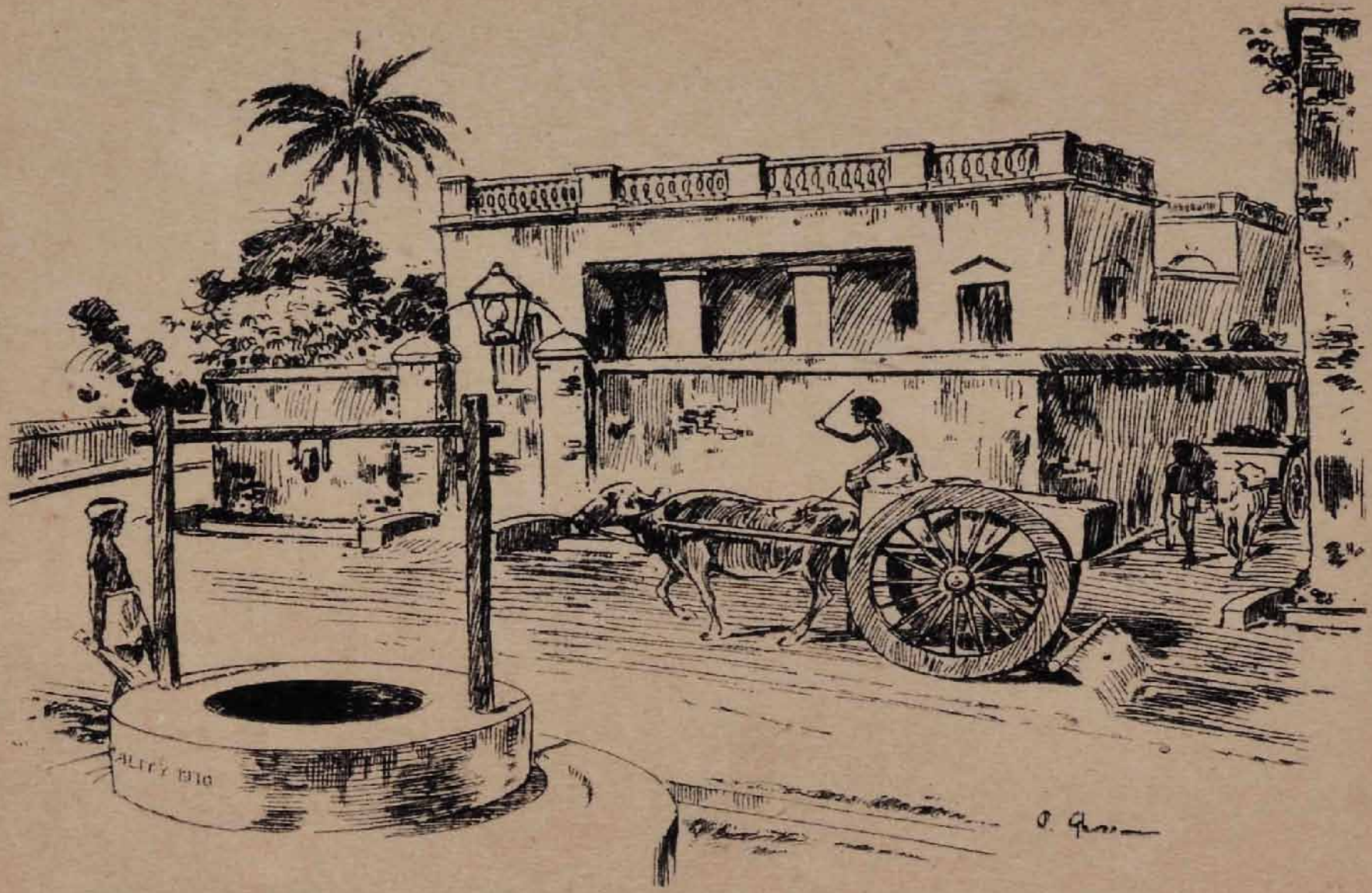
The village *chaukidár* is, however, the essential element of the rural police, the *Panchayat* system having only been resurrected to provide for his maintenance. His beat covers about a hundred houses, and his duties are defined by statute, in eleven items of which he is certainly not aware of more than three or four. If he is unusually intelligent, he knows—though he does not necessarily act on his knowledge—that he is expected to report all unnatural, suspicious or sudden deaths; that he should do

his best to arrest all proclaimed offenders ; that he is supposed to watch and report the movements of all bad characters and habitual criminals ; and that he ought to give regular information of all births and deaths, and so constitute the fallacious basis on which vital statistics rest. The enactment which is responsible for his existence is, however, silent on his most important duty—the nightly patrol of his beat. This is a comfortable counsel of perfection that is never worked up to in practice, and that cannot in fact be worked up to under existing conditions. The stipend is insufficient to support a *chaukidár* with prolific proclivities, and he therefore supplements it by the wages of hired labour, with the result that he usually finds it physically impossible to patrol his beat at night. He knows, besides, " what belongs to a watch " as well as the famous individuals whom Dogberry posted in a Messina street, and, if the Sub-Inspector of the local *tháná* is eccentric enough to look him up at night occasionally, he meets the unique misfortune calmly by sleeping at the house of some sympathetic friend within his beat. Burglars come and burglars go, but the *chaukidár* sleeps on

serenely, the last occasion on which he arrested a criminal *in flagrante delicto* at night having occurred on the Greek Calends. Another serious difficulty is that, like all Bengalis of the lower classes, the *chaukidár* dreads "the witching time of night." His respect for *Nisi*, the sable goddess of Night, explains, and to some extent excuses, his reluctance to respond to a call at night until it has been repeated four times, while his well-founded fear of ghosts makes him avoid all risk of intercourse with them even at the sacrifice of duty. Such beliefs are apt to "take lodgings in a head that's to be let unfurnished," and too much must not therefore be expected from the village *chaukidár*, especially as personal cowardice is no disgrace to a Bengali. This is recognised officially and, when a *chaukidár* does happen to do something useful that is really only a part of his duty, everyone is so impressed that he is promptly given a reward equal to a month or two's pay *pour encourager les autres*.

Attendance at weekly *tháná* parades is another duty which the *chaukidár* does not approve of. He does not believe that walking is a healthy form of exercise, and is

perhaps the only person to whom the prevalence of malaria is a boon by furnishing him with a reasonable excuse for frequent absences. Though it is strictly against the rules, it is not improbable that the principal utility of a *chaukidár* lies in the assistance he can give, usually unwillingly, in miscellaneous matters. As a guide over unfamiliar *ail*-paths, as a beast of burden at river crossings, as a beater at *shikár* parties, as a general handy man in camp, and as a menial servant to the Sub-Inspector of Police and the *Panchayat* members, he earns his munificent salary of five or six rupees a month to better practical effect than in discharging his legitimate functions.



THE MUNICIPAL COMMISSIONER'S RESIDENCE.

THE MUNICIPAL COMMISSIONER.

His public spirit seems a sham,
Assumed for selfish ends;
His eloquence is hard to dam,
When taxes try his friends.

DURING the last thirty years, the doctrine of "local self-government" has become one of the cardinal articles of the Indian political creed. Its real signification is, however, as little understood as was the shibboleth of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" by the red-capped revolutionists of the Terror. The Municipal Commissioner, as evolved in the *mofussil* of Bengal at any rate, is the incarnation of a prematurely-applied idea. In theory, he is the public-spirited representative of ratepayers who are interested in the reduction of mortality and disease by improved sanitation and purer water supply; in practice, he is a more or less prominent personage prompted by self-interest to seek the suffrages of indifferent electors, who are quite satisfied with jackals and pigs as scavengers, and who see no reason why they should not drink the water they bathe in.

The Eastern mind instinctively discounts the utility of an unpaid agent, and the Municipal Commissioner cannot be suspected of any intentional attempt to modify that characteristic belief. The one thing his constituents do, however, expect from him is that he will resist, with all the eloquence and ingenuity at his command, every proposal to increase municipal taxation, and it is at least to his credit that he never disappoints them in this respect. However worthy the object, and however necessary the improvement involving an additional outlay, the Commissioner keeps his eye on the next election and faithfully asserts that the ratepayers are unable to bear any further burden. Fortunately for the interests of efficient administration, every town in Bengal is divided into at least two factions which are reflected in opposition in the municipal council-chamber. Public spirit yields pride of place to party spirit, and the latter may sometimes be manipulated to a useful end. The conservancy of a certain small town not a hundred miles from Calcutta being conspicuous for the usual condition of promiscuous putrescence, the official Chairman conceived the common-

sense idea of constructing more latrines. He sounded several Commissioners, but found them opposed to his plan because more latrines meant more *mehtars*, and more *mehtars* meant more recurring expenditure which would have to be met by a latrine rate. The Chairman considered the matter, and then put forward a proposal to extend the provisions of the Municipal Act as regards latrines to some portions of the town only. He picked out the areas thoughtfully and justified their apparently invidious selection on the ground that they were the most congested. The Commissioners of the wards concerned objected to the proposal on principle, but the Commissioners of the exempted wards rallied to the Chairman's side, and the proposed rate was adopted by means of their votes, given because the Commissioners affected belonged to the opposite local party and the opportunity to score off them was irresistible. This action was short-sighted, but they did not realize it until the Chairman applied a somewhat Machiavellian euphrasy the following year by proposing the extension of the new rate to the remainder of the town, and carrying it with the cordial support of

the Commissioners who had been worsted the year before, and who naturally welcomed the chance of having the longest laugh.

The rights and duties of a Municipal Commissioner are very clearly defined in his own mind. He reluctantly recognises the disagreeable doctrine that all rights connote corresponding duties, without, however, admitting any quantitative correlation between the honours and the obligations. Subject to the important limitation that the law considerately allows five consecutive meetings to be ignored with impunity, the duties of a Municipal Commissioner, as understood by himself, are confined to attendance at the ordinary monthly meetings, where he can talk to his heart's content and be as obstructive as possible. This is the end of his civic responsibilities and not, as some misguided people may imagine, only their beginning. He is more than surprised if anything further is required from him, and, though he may appear to accept a delegated authority to supervise a work of improvement, he will speedily contrive to quarrel with the staff over matters that are outside his province, and will then thankfully revert to his natural state of

dignified indifference. His rights as a Municipal Commissioner are equally definite, though much less restricted. In personal importance he is, of course, exalted above his quondam fellows. His opinions on local matters quite unconnected with municipal affairs should, therefore, he considers, be received with due deference as *ex cathedra* pronouncements, while his statements on such subjects as his liability to income-tax, and his capacity, or more usually his incapacity, to contribute to the charitable dispensary, must likewise be accepted without demur as apodeictic propositions. Sites for wells should, as a matter of prescriptive privilege, be selected with proper regard for the convenience of his servants, and it is obvious to his mind that municipal lights fulfil their best *pro bono publico* purpose at the door of his house. The road that he uses must be regularly watered and repaired, and the municipal sweepers must clean out what passes for his private latrine without remuneration. If all these little attentions were denied, and other similar remuneratory amenities were withdrawn, the attractions of his public position would disappear and he would speedily retire into

private life, a disillusioned and disappointed man. Even then, however, he would emerge from his seclusion once in every three years, and strive to secure a representative of the same party as himself, in order that his legitimate interests in the matter of taxation might be adequately safeguarded.

Municipalities in Bengal are of three kinds, their respective grading in the hierarchy of local self-government being inversely proportionate to their practical utility. Lowest in position, but usually most efficient in operation, is the municipality in which all the Commissioners are appointed by Government, subject only to the proviso that not more than one-fourth of them hold salaried offices under Government. Next comes the municipality in which two-thirds of the Commissioners are elected, while the remaining one-third are appointed as above either by name or by official designation, the Chairman being also appointed by Government. Finally, there is the municipality in which the body of the Commissioners is constituted as in the preceding stage, with the additional power of electing one of its own members as Chairman. Every good Municipal Commissioner hopes to become

a Chairman some day, but the ordinary individual has little or no chance of achieving his ambition in competition with the ubiquitous pleader who aims at civic distinction because forensic fate is unkind. He retains his exiguous practice, however, and, while he supplements it as far as possible by means of his public influence, he is careful not to allow its interests to suffer if they should conflict with those of his municipal charge. The assertion of authority is apt to be prejudicial to popularity, and he remembers that he is only "drest in a little brief authority" until the next election. His legal clients consequently demand remissions of taxation with confidence, and only his enemies, and those of his friends, are afraid to commit noisome nuisances. Shakespeare has it that "soft stillness and the night become the touches of sweet harmony," but harmony is a relative term, and the discordant clashing of cymbals, accompanied by the vigorous banging of tom-toms, that apparently spells music—that "measured malice of music" of which Charles Lamb wrote—to the soul of the low-caste labourer, is usually calculated to induce something approaching homicidal mania

in a European mind if continued until the hour of sleep. The non-official Chairman will not, however, enforce the Municipal Bye-laws against such hideous saturnalia of sound because even the lowest supporters contribute to the consolidation of his position. Nor will he pay any practical attention to complaints against the trenching ground or against the numberless other effluvia that every Indian bazaar emits to the confutation of Mr. Kipling's science of olfactory geography. Besides such contingent disabilities, the non-official Chairman is, as a rule, constitutionally averse from physical exertion and continued effort. Personal inspections are therefore uncommon, except as a means to some other end, and notices to remove encroachments, or fill up mephitic manure pits, are seldom followed up any further if, as is usually the case, they are disregarded by the recipient. In conclusion, the frequent fact, that such a Chairman is intellectually incapable of selecting the fittest objects for municipal activity, may be illustrated by the example of one of them, who recently proposed to spend about half the annual income of his municipality on the re-excavation of a

superfluous tank, with an imposing bathing-ghat flanked by gravelled walks, when the shortest sojourn in his town forcibly and frequently recalled Falstaff's buck-basket with its "rankest compound of villainous smell that ever offended nostril," and reminded one of Coleridge's caustic comment on Cologne:

> "I counted two-and-twenty stenches,
> All well defined, and several stinks."

THE DISTRICT ENGINEER IN HIS NATURAL ELEMENT.

THE "WAGAIRAS."

The Magistrate who works for naught,
The Engineer whose works aren't wrought,
The Tout with evil fully fraught,
The Sentry without any thought;
They all appear below,
As seen by those who know.

A FEW remainders connected with the *Kacheri*, though not of sufficient importance or interest to justify separate treatment, may be considered in conclusion. The Honorary Magistrate, for example, is a more or less ornamental institution created in order to confer a cheap reward on local celebrities. The power of putting people into prison, though seldom or never exercised by the Honorary Magistrate, is one that commands considerable respect among the Indian community, and this fact explains the otherwise unaccountable competition for posts that promise neither profit nor prize. Some people think that, because the Honorary Magistrate is unpaid, his work must necessarily be better than that of the stipendiary magistrate who per-

forms his duties for pelf. This delusion is probably based on *a priori* reasoning from the somewhat ancient analogy between pressed men and volunteers, an analogy which is, however, inapplicable to a system where the combination of executive and judicial functions in the salaried staff develops a salutary sense of responsibility which the Honorary Magistrate need not cultivate. This is the *fons et origo* of his pronounced prejudice against conviction, and of his grateful appreciation of maxims like "the benefit of the doubt" and other similar "wise saws and modern instances" culled from the Law Reports. Impelled by the same happy freedom, he diligently tracks every technical flaw in the hope that it may vitiate the proceedings pending before him, and so sows the wind with the serene consciousness that someone else must reap the whirlwind. His intellectual appetite for irrelevant points of law that obscure the real issue is positively gluttonous, while his suspicion of circumstantial evidence amounts almost to a disease. Possibly because he knows his fellow-countrymen so intimately, he is inclined to demand a standard of proof

unattainable in India, and has been known to require direct evidence on points about which no one but the Almighty could satisfy him honestly. In addition, he is often influenced by considerations, such as those of caste, which have no connection with criminality, while, as regards appeals, he is apt to "apprehend more than cool reason ever comprehends." In short, he has both too much and too little of the true judicial temperament which, while it is indifferent to the consequences of its findings on administrative and social conditions, also disregards the feelings of the persons directly concerned and sets itself to decide a cause definitely with regard only to the facts and principles involved. Except in special cases, therefore, his activities are properly limited to petty assaults and public nuisances, in the trial of which his peculiar abilities cannot do very much harm, even if they do not do very much good, as, for instance, when the promiscuous pollution of the atmosphere is punished by a fine of four annas, while the iniquity of interfering with traffic along a road where no one is in any hurry is assessed at eight or ten times that amount.

The mention of roads suggests the District Engineer whose natural element is hot water. Occupying a comparatively precarious position as an employee of the District Board, his whole attention is concentrated on securing the convenience of the Chairman of that august body. The roads over which the latter is likely to tour are maintained in more or less passable condition, while as deaf a ear as possible is turned to the painful remonstrances and angry reproaches of those who are compelled to use the remaining roads, in which there are more ruts than road-surface, on which the approaches to unbridged rivers and streams are dangerous to man and beast, and over which cultivators lightheartedly lead irrigation channels because there are not enough culverts. For the rest, the District Engineer, if he is honest, generally has little or no control over his contractors and subordinates, and only escapes summary dismissal several times a year because the probabilities are against getting a more satisfactory successor.

The Tout, the Petition-writer, and the Stamp-vendor constitute an unholy trinity for the exploitation of ignorance. The Tout baits the hook by persuading the victim

to follow his advice in, say, registering a document. He then recommends an allied Stamp-vendor, who hears the terms of the transaction and announces the amount of stamp-paper legally required—to be purchased from him. The third partner, the Petition-writer, then draws up the document in imposing phraseology, and it is not until the unfortunate registrant presents it before the registering officer that he discovers the stamp duty to be insufficient and sees his document impounded on that ground. The Tout then affects righteous indignation at the Stamp-vendor's foolish mistake, and a properly-stamped deed is eventually completed for about double the legitimate outlay. The Tout, who is known also as a *torni*—an abbreviation not exactly flattering to one section of the legal profession—is a ubiquitous parasite, the "liege of all loiterers and malcontents," and, like Parolles, "a general offence." He is a modern embodiment of Punic cunning and Greek subtlety, and is the only known exception to Shakespeare's charitable dictum that "there is some soul of goodness in things evil." No amount of observation has ever distilled any goodness out of a Tout, who

continues rather "out of good still to find means of evil." He is, in fact, one of Milton's "Nature's bastards," and it is a pity that he cannot be entirely eliminated from existence. Litigation would be less than half what it is in all lower courts, and the necessity for appellate courts would almost disappear; unfortunately, the fees of lawyers would also be correspondingly diminished, and this fact is the salvation of the Tout.

With a passing glance at the Sub-Overseer of the Public Works Department (affectionately alluded to by its admirers as the public waste department), whose future would present a really brilliant prospect if his performances even remotely approached the promises he makes when presenting a completion certificate for countersignature, at the Liquor-vendor who adds dirty water to his "hot and rebellious liquors" to increase their bulk, and *dhaturá* or aconite to replace and augment their intoxicating power, and at the Coolie-*sardár*, who, by seductive and salacious stories, secures aboriginal recruits for some distant tea-garden in Assam, we come to the trusty Treasury-guard, of whom everyone returning from

a dance at the Club retains lively recollections. As one drives along either terribly tired after having manfully done one's duty, or comfortably cheerful after a third supper in which black beer has been the chief component, or merely dreamily drowsy over the *kálájagá* chances one has made hay or hash of, a strident-voiced sentry startles one out of one's few remaining senses, and a serious catastrophe is only averted by the pony's preference for the road to the drain as the shortest way home. In former times, the task of the Treasury-guard may have seemed simply a monotonous sinecure, but the political dacoits have changed all that. Nowadays, the solitary sentry, set in a halo of brilliant light, is made to realize his responsibility for the surplus revenue in his charge, and has therefore cultivated a more terrifying challenge than ever on the same principle that produces a whistle along a lonely dark road. "Halat! who goes adere, flend or floe?" is flung fiercely at every wayfarer, and if, by any chance, the answer comes back "Friend," the "Pass flend, allas vell" is no less fierce. More usually, however, the individual concerned has no idea that he is being addressed

and, even if his attention is attracted by the truculent tones, does not understand what is meant. The sentry then angrily shouts "*Kon hai?*" and is neither soothed nor enlightened by a simple "*Ham*" or an equally amorphous "*Batiwálá.*" Then ensues an animated colloquy, marked by lurid language on the sentry's part, and by stolid stupidity on that of the lantern-lit pedestrian, and the assurance is eventually elicited, and grudgingly accepted, that the latter's intentions are inoffensively itinerant. He is then permitted to pass on perplexed at the wonderful ways of authority, while the sentry virtuously resumes his pacing, pending the appearance of another victim.

GLOSSARY.

Ail	..	A small embankment between two plots of cultivated land.
Batiwálá	..	Person carrying a light.
Bhadralog	..	Gentleman class in Bengal.
Bhisti	..	A water-carrier.
Chaprás	..	A brass plate worn by menial servants showing the name of the office, or the designation of the official, to whom they are attached.
Chaprássi	..	A messenger or orderly wearing a *chaprás*.
Chaukidár	..	A village watchman.
Dák	..	Post or mail.
Darogá	..	A Sub-Inspector of Police.
Darri	..	A carpet of cotton.
Dhaturá	..	A deadly narcotic plant.
Dhoti	..	An article of clothing wrapped round the waist and between the legs, and fastened behind.
Guru	..	A vernacular teacher in Primary Schools.
Ham	..	I.
Kacheri	..	A court of justice or public office.
Kálájagá	..	Literally, a black place. Commonly used of sitting-out places at dances.
Kon hai	..	Who is it ?
Láthi	..	A stick, club or staff, often used as a weapon of assault.
Mahájan	..	A money-lender.

Mahout	..	The man who looks after, and drives, an elephant.
Massak	..	The leather bag used by the *bhisti* for carrying water.
Mehtar	..	A sweeper.
Mofassil	..	Up-country ; the interior as distinguished from the Presidency towns.
Mukhteár	..	A minor legal practitioner.
Murgi	..	A fowl.
Pakka	..	Strong, firm ; confirmed.
Panchayat	..	Any body of five persons.
Pankhá	..	A fan, usually suspended from the ceiling and pulled by a rope.
Pardánashín	..	Behind the *pardá* or curtain, *i. e.*, secluded from the gaze of all men except the husband and near relations.
Páthsháld	..	An elementary village school.
Raiyat	..	A cultivator.
Sabjantawálá	..	One who knows everything.
Sardár	..	A headman ; an agent for the recruitment of labour.
Sarkár	..	The British Government.
Sarkári	..	Of or belonging to the Government.
Shikár	..	Game, hunting, sport.
Swáráj	..	Self-government.
Tháná	..	A police station.
Toi	..	A Sanskrit school.
Torni	..	An abbreviation of "attorney," a tout.
Vakil	..	A legal practitioner of superior standing.
Wagaira	..	Etcetera.
Zulum	..	Oppression, tyranny.